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Page 13

Saudi student opens fire at Florida Naval base, killing 3

Associated Press

PENSACOLA, Fla. (AP) — An aviation student from Saudi Arabia opened fire in a classroom at the Naval Air Station Pensacola on Friday morning, killing three people in an attack the Saudi government quickly condemned and that U.S. officials were investigating for possible links to terrorism. The assault, which ended when a sheriff's deputy killed the attacker, was the second fatal shooting at a U.S. Navy base this week and prompted a massive law enforcement response and base lockdown.

Twelve people were hurt in the attack, including the two sheriff's deputies who were the first to respond, Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan said. One of the deputies was shot in the arm and the other in the knee, and both were expected to recover, he said. The shooter was a mem-

ber of the Saudi military who was in aviation training at the base, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said at a news conference. DeSantis spokesman Helen Ferre later said the governor learned about the shooter's identity from briefings with FBI and military officials.

A U.S. official who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity identified the shooter as Mohammed Saeed Alshamrani. The official wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Earlier Friday, two U.S. officials identified the student as a second lieutenant in the Saudi Air Force, and said authorities were investigating whether the attack was terrorism-related. They spoke on condition of anonymity to disclose information that had not yet been made public.

President Donald Trump declined to say whether



Navy Capt. Tim Kinsella briefs members of the media following a shooting at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Fla., Friday, Dec. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

the shooting was terrorism-related. Trump tweeted his condolences to the families of the victims and noted that he had received a

phone call from Saudi King Salman. The Saudi government offered condolences to the victims and their families and said it would

provide "full support" to U.S. authorities investigating the shooting.

Continued on Page 2



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Continued from Front

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirms that the perpetrator of this horrific attack does not represent the Saudi people whatsoever," the government said in a statement. "The American people are held in the highest regard by the Saudi people."

Vice Minister of Defense Khalid bin Salman noted on Twitter that he and many Saudi military personnel have trained on U.S. military bases and gone on to fight "against terrorism and other threats" alongside American forces. "Today's tragic event is strongly condemned by everyone in Saudi Arabia," he said.

DeSantis said Saudi Arabia needed to be held to account for the attack.

"Obviously, the government ... needs to make things better for these victims," he said. "I think they're going to owe a debt here, given that this was one of their individuals."

A national security expert from the Heritage Foundation warned against mak-



In this Jan. 29, 2016 file photo shows the entrance to the Naval Air Base Station in Pensacola, Fla. Associated Press

ing an immediate link to terrorism.

"If there is some connection to terrorism, well, then, that's that," Charles "Cully" Stimson said. "But let's not assume that because he was a Saudi national in their air force and he mur-

dered our people, that he is a terrorist."

Stimson said it was also possible that the shooter was "a disgruntled evil individual who was mad because he wasn't going to get his pilot wings, or he wasn't getting the qualification ratings that he wanted, or he had a beef with somebody, or there was a girlfriend involved who slighted him."

Florida U.S. Sen. Rick Scott issued a scathing statement

calling the shooting an act of terrorism "whether this individual was motivated by radical Islam or was simply mentally unstable."

Scott added that it was "clear that we need to take steps to ensure that any and all foreign nationals are scrutinized and vetted extensively before being embedded with our American men and women in uniform."

U.S. Defense Secretary

Mark Esper said in a statement Friday that he was "considering several steps to ensure the security of our military installations and the safety of our service members and their families." He did not elaborate.

The U.S. has long had a robust training program for Saudis, providing assistance in the U.S. and in the kingdom.

The shooting, however, shined a spotlight on the two countries' sometimes rocky relationship.

The kingdom is still trying to recover from the killing last year of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. Saudi intelligence officials and a forensic doctor killed and dismembered Khashoggi on Oct. 2, 2018, just as his fiancée waited outside the diplomatic mission.

One of the Navy's most historic and storied bases, Naval Air Station Pensacola sprawls along the waterfront southwest of the city's downtown and dominates the economy of the surrounding area.

Part of the base resembles a college campus, with buildings where 60,000 members of the Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard train each year in multiple fields of aviation. □

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Supreme Court temporarily shields Trump bank records

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Friday temporarily shielded the bank records of President Donald Trump and three of his children from House Democrats.

In an order signed by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the House cannot enforce subpoenas issued to Deutsche Bank and Capital One at least until Dec. 13.

The justices are scheduled to discuss at least one and maybe two other similar cases at their private conference that day. One concerns a subpoena from the House for Trump's



President Donald Trump smiles during a luncheon with members of the United Nations Security Council in the Cabinet Room at the White House in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019.

Associated Press

financial records and the other is a demand from the Manhattan district attorney for his tax returns. The court already has blocked the House from getting the financial records while it considers

what to do with the cases. The district attorney has agreed to hold off enforcing his subpoena until the justices act. A decision on whether to hear the cases could come by mid-December. □

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Asylum-seekers who crossed in Arizona returned to Mexico

ASTRID GALVAN
Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The U.S. government said Friday it had sent nine Venezuelans — including two families — back to Mexico after they tried to make an asylum claim by driving up to a customs officer instead of lingering south of the border on a list waiting to be called up under a Trump administration policy targeting asylum-seekers.

That practice — and that of other desperate asylum-seekers who have run down vehicle lanes at an Arizona port of entry in order to reach the U.S. — severely slowed down traffic over the holiday weekend after Customs and Border Protection sealed off several lanes of traffic.

Advocates say the asylum-seekers forced wait on a list under a Trump policy known as metering are desperate and afraid of waiting in Mexico for months

before they're even given a chance to make an asylum claim. Migrants forced to wait in Mexico are often targeted for extortion, kidnapping and robberies.

Customs and Border Protection says asylum-seekers who drive or run up to officers pose safety risks.

"It is disrespectful to those who have waited in line to be seen, and to the officers working diligently to process everyone in a safe and secure manner, to attempt skipping to the front of the line this way," spokeswoman Meredith Mingledorff said in an email.

Mingledorff said the Venezuelans arrived in a car at an Arizona port of entry in a group of three families and two single adults on Wednesday.

They were then bused roughly 340 miles (547 kilometers) to El Paso, Texas, and returned to Ciudad Juarez, where thousands of other asylum-seekers are

waiting in tent camps. She added that using cars to reach the port of entry "will not allow asylum-seekers automatic entrance into the United States."

An estimated 4.6 million Venezuelans have fled the crisis-torn country, where food and medicine extremely scarce.

The policy under which the Venezuelans who crossed on Wednesday were returned to Mexico is widely known as "Remain in Mexico." It forces asylum-seekers to wait south of the border while the U.S. immigration cases are heard.

An estimated 55,000 asylum-seekers have been returned to Mexico since the policy, which is being challenged in federal court, was implemented in February in some parts of the border. It was expanded to Arizona last week, when agents in the Tucson Sector began busing migrants to El Paso to be returned



This June 1, 2009, file photo, shows vehicles waiting to enter the U.S. through The Dennis DeConcini Port of Entry in downtown Nogales, Ariz.

Associated Press

to Juarez. The government won't say how many people have been taken from Arizona to El Paso.

Migrants forced to wait in Mexico are often met with the same violence and corruption they fled.

A report by the Human Rights First released this week documented at least 636 public reports of

violence against asylum-seekers returned to Mexico including rape, kidnapping and torture. Human Rights First said that was a steep increase over October, when the group had identified 343 attacks, and noted the latest figure is surely an under-count because most crime victims don't report. □

GOP Rep. pitches LGBTQ rights bill with religious exemptions

By ELANA SCHOR
Associated Press

As Democrats champion anti-discrimination protections for the LGBTQ community and Republicans counter with worries about safeguarding religious freedom, one congressional Republican is offering a proposal on Friday that aims to achieve both goals. The bill that Utah GOP Rep. Chris Stewart plans to unveil would shield LGBTQ

individuals from discrimination in employment, housing, education, and other public services — while also carving out exemptions for religious organizations to act based on beliefs that may exclude those of different sexual orientations or gender identities. Stewart's bill counts support from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but it has

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In this Thursday, Sept. 19, 2019 file photo, Rep. Chris Stewart, R-Utah, a member of the House Intelligence Committee, leaves a meeting with national intelligence inspector general Michael Atkinson about a whistleblower complaint, at the Capitol in Washington.

Associated Press

yet to win a backer among House Democrats who unanimously supported a more expansive LGBTQ rights measure in May. But the uphill climb for his plan doesn't daunt Stewart, who sees the bill as a way to "bridge that gap" between preventing discrimination and allowing religion to inform individual decisions.

"I don't know many people who wake up and say 'I want to discriminate'. Most people find that offensive," Stewart told The Associated Press. "There are people who, and I'm included among them, have religious convictions that put them in a bind about how to reconcile those two principles."

The Utah lawmaker's legislation comes as the Supreme Court prepares to rule on cases that touch squarely on the issue of employment discrimination against LGBTQ people, who currently do not receive specific protection in federal civil rights laws. While 21 states have laws that bar employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gen-

der identity, Democrats in Congress and running for president are pushing for a federal statute that would provide broader protections.

But that more sweeping bill's chances of passage are low unless Democrats take back full control of Congress as well as the White House, given President Donald Trump's opposition and Republican critics who warn of a risk to religious freedom.

That prospect has informed Stewart and outside groups' work on a proposal to enshrine rights for the LGBTQ community while also preserving the right for religious groups to act in accordance with their faiths.

Among other faith-based exemptions to anti-discrimination protections in the bill is an allowance for religious groups such as churches and schools to employ those who align with their internal guidelines, according to a summary provided in advance of its release.

The bill also would prohibit religious groups that oppose same-sex marriage from having their tax-exempt status revoked.

"We have taken back the religious liberty principle from extremists who I think do want to do harm to LGBTQ people and minority rights," said Tyler Deaton, a senior adviser to the American Unity Fund, a nonprofit supporting Stewart's bill that seeks to build conservative support for LGBTQ rights. Deaton added that some religious conservative groups who were consulted on the bill ultimately chose not to endorse it.

Despite that resistance from some on the right, Stewart's bill sparked sharp criticism from progressives who decry its exemptions as large enough to enable ongoing mistreatment of LGBTQ individuals.

"We need to address the real and pervasive problem that is discrimination against LGBTQ people, and everyone should come to the table to address the problem," said Laura Durso, a vice president at the left-leaning Center for American Progress.

"But what we cannot do is treat LGBTQ people as second-class citizens by creating carve-outs that enable discrimination." □

Officials list pot vape brands reported in U.S. outbreak

By MIKE STOBBE
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Health officials investigating a nationwide outbreak of vaping illnesses have listed, for the first time, the vape brands most commonly linked to hospitalizations. Most of the nearly 2,300 people who suffered lung damage had vaped liquids that contain THC, the high-inducing part of marijuana.

In a report released Friday, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention listed the products most often cited by patients, noting that some of them said they vaped more than one.

Dank Vapes was the brand used by 56% of the hospitalized patients nationwide. Dank is not a licensed product coming from one business, it is empty packaging that can be ordered from Chinese internet sites. Illicit vaping cartridge makers can buy the empty packages and then fill them with whatever they choose.

Other product names at the top of the list from CDC were TKO (15%), Smart Cart (13%) and Rove (12%).

"It's not likely that a single brand is responsible for this outbreak," said Brian King, a senior CDC official on the investigation.

Some of the brands cited by the CDC are sold in states with legalized marijuana. But counterfeits of those legitimate brands have flooded the market around the country, forcing some to redesign their packaging.

Bill Loucks, co-founder of TKO Products, said his company sells only to licensed dispensaries in California, but the company gets emails asking about TKO-branded cartridges purchased elsewhere.

"If you bought them outside of California ... you are the proud owner of fakes," Loucks said in an email.

The CDC also said Friday that the worst of the outbreak may be over. Preliminary data indicates hospitalizations peaked in mid-September and have been declining since, of-



In this Aug. 28, 2019, file photo, a man exhales while smoking an e-cigarette in Portland, Maine. Associated Press

ficials said. Investigators want more data until they feel certain the outbreak is waning. If it is, there may be more than one reason, including growing public caution about vaping or perhaps a change in what cartridge makers are putting into them, King said. But cases are still coming in, with 2,291 reported this year — including 176 that joined the tally in late November. Every state has reported cases, and 25 states and the District of Columbia have reported a total of 48 deaths.

Symptoms include trouble breathing, chest pain, fatigue and vomiting. About half the patients are people in their teens or early 20s. The outbreak appears to have started in March. CDC officials have gradually come to focus their investigation on black-market THC cartridges.

An analysis of about 1,800 of the hospitalized patients found about 80% said they used at least one

THC product. Last month, CDC officials said they had narrowed in on a culprit — a chemical compound called vitamin E acetate that has been commonly found in the lungs of sick patients and in the products they vaped.

Vitamin E acetate is a thickening agent that's been added to illicit THC vaping liquids. But it's possible it also may have been added to vaping liquids containing CBD, another cannabis extract, King said. About 1% of the patients said they had vaped CBD products only.

The agency is recommending that people do not use any electronic cigarettes or vaping products that contain THC, especially those obtained from friends, family members or black market dealers.

However, 13% of patients said they vaped only nicotine. CDC officials are continuing to look at nicotine-containing vapes, and to advise caution about all types of vaping products until the investigation is concluded, King said. □

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Pearl Harbor shooting unfolded in 23 seconds in packed area

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — The U.S. Navy sailor who fatally shot two people at Pearl Harbor before killing himself was unhappy with his commanders and had been undergoing counseling, a military official said Friday. Gabriel Romero, 22, also faced non-judicial punishment, which is a lower-level administrative process for minor misconduct, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters not made public. He used his two service weapons in the attack, the official said.

Romero also wounded a 36-year-old man in the attack Wednesday at the naval shipyard within the storied military base before turning the gun on himself, authorities said. That victim is in stable condition at a hospital.

In a second attack at a Navy base this week, a shooter opened fire in a classroom building Friday at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida — leaving four people dead, including the assailant, and multiple people wounded.

The Pearl Harbor shooting came just days before a ceremony to remember those who perished in



Left to right, NCIS Special Agent Norman Dominesey, U.S. Attorney for Hawaii Kenji Price, Honolulu Police Chief Susan Ballard and Rear Adm. Robert Chadwick, the commander of Navy Region Hawaii, listen during a news conference Friday, December 6, 2019, about the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard shooting.

Associated Press

the Japanese bombing 78 years ago that propelled the U.S. into World War II. Security will be beefed up as usual for the annual event that is expected to draw survivors, veterans, dignitaries and others Saturday to honor the more than 2,300 Americans killed on Dec. 7, 1941.

Military officials said Friday at a news conference that they had not found a motive yet for the shooting but

that there's no evidence of domestic terrorism. They said the isolated attack, witnessed by shipyard employees in an area with thousands of workers, unfolded in about 23 seconds. Romero, who was from Texas and enlisted in the Navy two years ago, was dead when authorities arrived, and he was armed for his job standing watch and providing security for the fast attack submarine USS

Columbia, which is at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam for maintenance, officials said.

Retired Army Col. Gregory Gross, a former military judge, said that just because Romero faced non-judicial punishment doesn't automatically mean he should have been taken off watch duty.

"It could have been something as simple as you were late for work," said Gross,

who presided over part of the court-martial for the 2009 shooting at Fort Hood in Texas.

But if the misconduct were something like assault, then it would have been easy to take Romero off watch duty and take away his weapons, Gross said.

"All it takes is for the commander to say, 'You're not getting a weapon,' and he would be taken off that watch," he said.

It was not known if Romero knew his victims, Roldan Agustin, 49, and Vincent Kapoi Jr., 30.

Agustin was born in Laoag City, Philippines, and moved to Hawaii when he was 2, according to his mother, Ida Agustin.

"He's a good man," she told The Associated Press through tears.

"I'm so sorry, anak ko, I'm still shaking," she added Friday, using the phrase "my child" in Ilocano, a Filipino language.

Family members said Roldan Agustin served in the Navy and retired from the Army National Guard, then became a metals inspector at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

In a statement, his brother said Agustin enjoyed working on cars with his friends and spending time with family. □

No excessive radiation at Detroit River aggregate spill site

By JOHN FLESHER
AP Environmental Writer

Tests at a Michigan industrial site where limestone construction aggregate recently spilled into the Detroit River turned up no indication of excessive radiation levels, a state agency reported Friday.

Staffers with the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy inspected the Detroit Bulk Storage property with federal and local officials, taking radiological measurements and sampling river water just offshore in southwest Detroit, spokesman Nick Assendelft said. A drone provided aerial footage.

"Today's testing confirmed

there is no elevated radiation risk to health or the environment associated with the collapse," the state agency said in a statement.

The company stores and provides material for road construction, according to its website. It did not respond to phone and email messages from The Associated Press.

The release happened Nov. 26, although the state agency didn't learn about it until Wednesday, Assendelft said. The company wasn't required to report it because the aggregate is not a hazardous material, he said.

The aggregate was piled

along a seawall, part of which collapsed, he said. The cause is undetermined, although one possibility is erosion on the swollen river — part of the natural channel linking Lakes Huron and Erie, which with the other Great Lakes are experiencing the highest water levels in decades.

The company was still trying to measure how much of the crushed limestone flowed into the river but provided a tentative estimate of 8,500 cubic yards, Assendelft said.

The site formerly was occupied by the Revere Copper and Brass Corp., which produced uranium materials in the 1940s and 1950s. That

company was a subcontractor for the Manhattan Project, which developed the atomic bomb during World War II, according to U.S. Department of Energy documents.

Staffers with the state environmental department tested for radiation in numerous spots near the river and elsewhere on the property, recording more than 1,000 data points.

Naturally occurring radiation levels in Michigan typically range between 5 and 8 microroentgen per hour (Ur/hr). Testing found background levels at 4 Ur/hr at points farthest from the river and 3 to 5 Ur/hr closer to the water — including

inside crevasses opened by the collapse, the statement said. The inspectors also took water samples from the river offshore from the spill site as well as upstream and downstream. They will be analyzed for industrial contaminants including suspended solids, uranium and other metals, and PCBs.

The spill isn't expected to endanger drinking water quality, according to the Great Lakes Water Authority, which provides water and sewage services for the Detroit metro area. The agency has two intake pipes in the river but both are several miles from the spill location. □



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Roof collapses at historic church in black Florida community

ORLANDO (AP) — The roof has collapsed on a 94-year-old Florida church that was only recently granted historic landmark status, further endangering efforts to preserve the surrounding black community.

No one was injured when the roof of the Black Bottom House of Prayer in Parramore crumbled in on itself Thursday morning, news outlets report. It's unclear what caused it, fire spokeswoman Ashley Pagni told the Orlando Sentinel.

"The slightest little change in shift of weight or wind and the rest of the building will collapse," Orlando Fire District Chief Bryan Davis told WKMG-TV.

City officials ordered the unstable structure to be demolished. Pastor Dana Jackson and her two grandchildren raced inside Thursday trying to prevent that, and prayed for several minutes before leaving. City Commissioner Regina Hill also arrived and had the demolition work temporarily halted, but it was expected to resume on Friday.

Jackson bought the church in 2015 and was leading restoration efforts. She said it's painful to see it like this. "It's a personal pain because I used the money from the death of my son to purchase the church," she said. "It was my grieving project. The tears you see today is my work, it's folded."



This photo provided by the Orlando Fire Dept. shows damage to the Black Bottom House of Prayer in Orlando, Fla., on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019.

Associated Press

The church was built in 1925, according to its website. Black families had moved to the area in 1916, calling it "black bottom" for the rain-fed flood water that lingered so long, people had to use canoes for transportation. Initially known as the home of the Pleasant Hill Colored Methodist Episcopal congregation, the church was later renamed Carter's Tabernacle CME before getting its current name. The neighborhood born from segregation now faces gentrification after struggling with poverty and institutional racism for decades. The Sentinel reported that its identity is in question as real estate values and rents skyrocket, forcing longtime residents out. Median rent in the zip code including Parramore climbed from \$916 in 2014 to more than \$1,200 this year, according to the online real estate company Zillow. □

Supreme Court keeps federal executions on hold

By MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Friday blocked the Trump administration from restarting federal executions next week after a 16-year break.

The justices denied the administration's plea to undo a lower court ruling in favor of inmates who have been given execution dates. The first of those had been scheduled for Monday, with a second set for Friday. Two more inmates had been given execution dates in January.

Attorney General William Barr announced during the summer that federal executions would resume using a single drug, pentobarbital, to put inmates to death.

U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan in Washington, D.C., temporarily halted the executions after some of the chosen inmates challenged the new execution procedures in court. Chutkan ruled that the procedure approved by Barr likely violates the Federal Death Penalty Act.

The federal appeals court in Washington had earlier denied the administration's emergency plea to put Chutkan's ruling on hold and allow the executions to proceed.

Federal executions are likely to remain on hold at least for several months, while the appeals court



In this Jan. 24, 2019, file photo, the Supreme Court is seen at sunset in Washington.

Associated Press

in Washington undertakes a full review of Chutkan's ruling.

The Supreme Court justices directed the appeals court to act "with appropriate dispatch."

Justice Samuel Alito wrote in a short separate opinion that he believes the government ultimately will win the case and would have set a 60-day deadline for appeals court action. Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh joined Alito's opinion.

Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said the legal fight would continue. "While we are disappointed with the ruling, we will argue the case on its merits in the D.C. Circuit and, if necessary, the Supreme Court," Kupec said in a statement.

Four inmates won temporary reprieves from the court rulings. Danny Lee was the first inmate scheduled for execution, at 8 o'clock Monday morning.

Lee was convicted of killing a family of three, including an 8-year-old.

The government had next planned on Friday to execute Wesley Ira Purkey, who raped and murdered a 16-year-old girl and killed an 80-year-old woman. His lawyers say Purkey is suffering from dementia and he has a separate lawsuit pending in federal court in Washington, D.C.

Then in January, executions had been scheduled for Alfred Bourgeois, who tortured, molested and then beat his two-and-a-half-year-old daughter to death, and Dustin Lee Honken, who killed five people, including two children.

A fifth inmate, Lezmond Mitchell, has had his execution blocked by the federal appeals court in San Francisco over questions of bias against Native Americans. Mitchell beheaded a 63-year-old woman and her 9-year-

Germany: Merkel's partners give coalition 'realistic chance'

By GEIR MOULSON

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's junior governing party is giving Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition a "realistic chance" of survival, one of its new leaders said Friday before winning a mandate to seek new concessions. The party rejected a call to leave the government immediately.

A congress of the Social Democratic Party formally endorsed a membership ballot's choice of the left-leaning duo of Saskia Esken and Norbert Walter-Borjans as co-leaders.

In that membership ballot, whose results were announced last weekend, members rejected a rival team of Vice Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Klara Geywitz that clearly favored staying in Merkel's coalition and was backed by the party establishment.

The congress formally ends a six-month leadership hiatus for the struggling center-left party after former leader Andrea Nahles quit following a dismal performance in European Parliament elections. But it was set to leave open questions about its future course.

Esken and Walter-Borjans have been more skeptical



Norbert Walter-Borjans and Saskia Esken, designated chairpersons, hug each other after their speeches at the Social Democratic Party, SPD, party's convention in Berlin, Germany, Friday, Dec. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

then their defeated rivals about staying in the "grand coalition" of what were traditionally Germany's biggest parties, but also stopped short of demanding an immediate departure halfway through the parliamentary term.

Merkel's center-right Union bloc has made clear that it isn't prepared to embark on a full renegotiation of the accord underpinning the coalition, which took office last year after the Social Democrats reluctantly agreed to enter the chancellor's fourth-term government.

On Friday, delegates

backed a motion drawn up with the new leadership that calls for talks with the Union aimed at raising the national minimum wage, increasing public investment and raising the price of carbon dioxide in a recently agreed package of climate measures.

It was careful not to set specific targets, and avoided both setting a time limit and taking a clear position on the coalition's future. It said that the party leadership will evaluate the situation after the talks.

That didn't go far enough for some left-wingers, but their call for an immediate

exit was easily defeated. The motion "is formulated in such a way that we can negotiate with the Union, with all respect and on a fair level, about the question of the 'grand coalition' continuing," Esken said in a speech to delegates.

"I was and I am skeptical as far as the future of this 'grand coalition' is concerned. I haven't changed my mind," she added. "But with this motion, we are giving the coalition a realistic chance of continuing — no more but also no less."

However long the coalition lasts, Esken pledged to implement "steadfast Social Democratic politics" in it. Walter-Borjans underlined his skepticism about the Merkel government's policy of keeping the German budget balanced, a policy known as the "black zero" that Scholz — who is finance minister as well as vice chancellor — has helped implement.

"If the black zero stands against a better future for our children, then it is wrong — then it must go," Walter-Borjans said. That also goes for the "debt brake," a rule that limits new borrowing, he added.

"We are in this coalition and we are in a democracy,

and we must be prepared to make compromises," he said. "But they must be justifiable and they must not obscure what we stand for."

Esken won the backing of 75.9% of delegates at Friday's meeting to become co-leader and Walter-Borjans won 89.2%. Both ran unopposed. But they face a tougher job to win over the wider German public.

Polls currently show support for the Social Democrats at 13 or 14%. That compares with their already poor showing of 20.5% in the 2017 election; support for Merkel's Union bloc is about twice as high and the Social Democrats also have fallen behind the Greens, traditionally smaller rivals on the left.

If the Social Democrats do in the end decide to walk out of the coalition, it's unclear what would happen. Merkel's bloc could seek to carry on in a minority government or, theoretically at least, negotiate an alternative coalition; or the result could eventually be an early election.

Merkel has said that this will be her final term. The next election is currently due in the fall of 2021. □

Lebanese PM asks friendly nations for credit amid crisis

Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's outgoing prime minister called on several Arab and world leaders Friday to help his country secure credit lines for imports from friendly nations as the tiny Mediterranean country passes through its worst economic and financial crisis in decades.

According to a statement released by his office, Saad Hariri sent letters to the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, France, China, Russia, Italy and the United States as part of his efforts to ease the liquidity crisis and secure food stuff and raw materials.

Lebanon is experiencing its worst economic and financial crisis amid zero



Anti-government protesters shout slogans during ongoing protests against the Lebanese political class and the financial crisis, in Beirut, Lebanon, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019.

Associated Press

economic growth and massive debt. Local banks have imposed unprecedented capital controls and thousands of employees have been either

laid off or had their salaries slashed. The crisis has worsened since Oct. 17, when nationwide protests against years of corruption and mismanagement

erupted, leading to the resignation of Hariri's government two weeks later. Protesters now want that entire political elite, that has ruled the country since the end of the 1975-90 civil war, out. President Michel Aoun said the financial measures taken in the country are "temporary because of the current financial conditions."

Aoun, who spoke during a meeting with international investment bankers, said that dealing with the economic and financial crisis will be the priority of the new government once it's formed. He added that offshore exploration for oil and gas will begin in January and would boost the country's credentials.

Aoun has called for binding consultations with heads of parliamentary blocs to name a new prime minister on Monday. He added that the formation of a new Cabinet would help friendly countries release \$11 billion in loans and grants made by international donors at the CEDRE conference in Paris last year. Lebanon imports most of its basic needs, including wheat, petrol and medicine, leading to a huge trade deficit. Importers have been facing difficulties in getting U.S. dollars to cover imports as the local currency, which has been pegged to the dollar since 1997, lost 40% of its value on the black market. □

Independence not on ballot but on voters' minds in Scotland

By RENEE GRAHAM

GREGORY KATZ

Associated Press

ST. ANDREWS, Scotland

(AP) — Ask voters in this picturesque university town in eastern Scotland how they're voting in next week's election, and they're likely to transition seamlessly from talking about which candidate they want to send to Parliament to discussing whether or not they want another bite at voting for Scottish independence, which voters rejected in 2014.

The question of Scotland's independence from the rest of the United Kingdom is not on the ballot, but it's uppermost in the minds of many voters in St. Andrews, and elsewhere in Scotland, as they make their final choices.

That's because the decision to take the United Kingdom out of the European Union — known as Brexit — has upended the political landscape and exposed old divisions among England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, fraying the ties that bind the U.K. In Scotland, that means talk of independence. In Northern Ireland, it means fears that the sectarian violence that plagued it for decades could return.

These issues, and Brexit itself, are just below the surface in the Dec. 12 general election. Rarely has an election been so fraught



Scottish National Party (SNP) leader Nicola Sturgeon launches the party's election campaign bus, featuring a portrait of herself, at Port Edgar Marina in the town of South Queensferry, Scotland, before setting off on a tour of Scotland for the final week of the SNP's General Election campaign, Thursday Dec. 5, 2019.

Associated Press

with implications for the future of the United Kingdom, a structure often taken for granted because of its familiar symbols — the queen who has reigned for more than six decades, the Parliament that is centuries old but is vulnerable as it engineers a radical change in its relations with the rest of Europe. Voters in Scotland overwhelmingly chose to remain in the EU in the 2016 referendum, so it's fair to say Scotland is being dragged through Brexit against its will.

The North East Fife district that is home to St. Andrews was the tightest in the Unit-

ed Kingdom's last general election, only two votes meant victory for the Scottish National Party over the Liberal Democrats in 2017 and the foes are grappling again. While they are united in their rejection of Brexit, they are divided over whether Scotland should vote, again, on its own independence.

The Scottish Nationalists say yes, that Brexit is so dire it merits another vote on whether Scotland, an economic player in its own right, blessed with ample energy resources, natural beauty, and a rich tradition of self-sufficiency, should

forge its own way as an independent nation. The Liberals, meanwhile, remain committed to remaining inside the U.K., even if Britain extricates itself from the European Union as scheduled on Jan. 31.

Retired boxer Chris Honess has no doubt where he stands: He's going to vote against the Scottish Nationalists with the hope of quelling talk of another independence referendum. He thinks the whole structure of European defense would be threatened if Scotland breaks away.

"I am 100% against the breakup of the United King-

dom," said Honess, 69. "I think we're very good at complaining, actually the U.K. works very, very well. If the SNP (Scottish Nationalist Party) were to succeed in breaking up the United Kingdom that would definitely weaken NATO, and I'm a huge supporter of NATO."

If no party gets an outright majority in the upcoming vote, SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon had made clear that any party looking for her backing in a coalition government will have to agree to authorize Scotland to hold another independence referendum — and to accept the results.

John Curtice, a professor of politics at the University of Strathclyde, said the debate over independence and Brexit are now closely "interlaced" in Scotland. He says the results in North East Fife and many Scottish districts in the coming election are extremely hard to predict.

"When you're talking about Brexit, you're also tending to talk about independence," he said. "And when you're talking about independence, you're also talking about Brexit."

It's not just in Scotland. In Northern Ireland, some believe the election, if it brings the current Brexit deal to reality, could nudge Northern Ireland away from the U.K. and closer to the Republic of Ireland. □

Greece: Thousands rally to mark police shooting anniversary

Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) —

Thousands of protesters marched through central Athens amid heavy security Friday, to mark the anniversary of the fatal police shooting of a teenager that sparked extensive rioting 11 years ago.

Police said about 5,000 people took part in an evening demonstration that included youths from anarchist and anti-establishment organizations, while earlier some



Protesters gather during a rally in Athens, Friday, Dec. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

2,000 attended a midday rally organized by student groups.

About 3,500 police officers took up positions around

the capital in an attempt to prevent the violence that has marked similar commemorations in past years. □

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World powers press Iran to reverse nuke deal violations

By KIYOKO METZLER

Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — World powers pressured Iran on Friday to reverse recent atomic activities that violate the landmark 2015 nuclear deal, but stopped short of deciding on whether to proceed with a move that could see the case brought before the UN Security Council and a "snapback" of sanctions that had been lifted under the accord, according to a Chinese official.

Fu Cong told reporters after the meeting that brought together Iran with the five powers remaining in the deal that China had argued against invoking the so-called dispute resolution mechanism of the agreement.

"Iran has made it very clear that all the actions are reversible and that they are ready to come back to full compliance," he told reporters.

The agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, has been unraveling since the unilateral withdrawal of the Unit-



The European Union's political director Helga Schmid and Iran's deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, from left, wait for a bilateral meeting as part of the closed-door nuclear talks with Iran in Vienna, Austria, Friday, Dec. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

ed States last year and the re-imposition of American sanctions, which has left Iran's economy struggling. In response, Iran has recently exceeded the stockpiles of uranium and heavy water allowed by the deal, and has started enriching uranium at a purity level beyond what is permitted.

Tehran's violations all announced in advance and verified by International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors have been an attempt to pressure the other world powers involved France, Germany, Britain, China and Russia to offer new economic incentives to offset the effect of the American sanctions.

Iran has previously suggested it would walk back those activities if it receives the economic incentives it needs. Following the meeting, Iranian representative Abbas Araghchi told reporters that he thought the world powers "are interested to find practical solutions so they can continue their economic coopera-

tion with Iran."

"We see that seriousness amongst these countries, but of course there are problems and obstacles in the way," he said.

European Union foreign policy official Helga Schmid, who chaired the meeting, tweeted that "we have a collective responsibility to preserve" the agreement. She said she "urged all participants to report back to their capitals as strong efforts are needed by all sides."

Before the Vienna talks, German Foreign Ministry spokesman Christofer Burger told reporters in Berlin that Iran's approach was "unacceptable" and that diplomats would make that clear at the Vienna meeting. "We will underscore that Iran must fully reverse its breaches of the JCPOA," he said.

The European nations involved have threatened that they could invoke the dispute resolution mechanism, which can be triggered by any party to the JCPOA, if Iran does not comply. □

Iraqi official: 6 protesters killed, 30 wounded in Baghdad

SAMYA KULLAB

MURTADA FARAJ

Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqi security and medical officials say unknown assailants shot at protesters in Baghdad's Khilani Square late Friday, killing six and wounding 30.

Officials requested anonymity in line with regulations.

The attacks come one day after a string of suspicious stabbing incidents left at least 13 wounded in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, the epicenter of Iraq's leaderless protest movement.

Iraq's highest Shiite religious authority called Friday for the formation of a new government within the allotted deadline, and without foreign interference, as the clock ticks down on lawmakers to select a new premier following the resignation of



Anti-government protesters gather near barriers set up by security forces to close Rasheed Street during ongoing protests in Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019.

Associated Press

Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi last week.

Thousands of anti-government protesters from

across southern Iraq joined demonstrators in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, the epicenter of the protest

movement in the capital, hours after the sermon, according to security officials.

"We hope the head of the new government and its members are chosen within the constitutional deadline and according to the aspirations of the people and away from outside influence," the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani said in his weekly Friday sermon in the holy city of Najaf. The sermon is always delivered by a representative.

He added that the Shiite religious establishment would not take part in the government formation process. At least 400 people have died since the leaderless uprising shook Iraq on Oct. 1, with thousands of Iraqis taking to the streets in Baghdad and the predominantly Shiite southern Iraq decrying corruption, poor services, lack of jobs and calling for an end to the political system that was imposed after the 2003 U.S. invasion. □



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Hong Kong police sound alarm over homemade explosives

By JOHN LEICESTER
Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong's much-maligned police force provided a rare behind-the-scenes look Friday at its bomb disposal squad to show the potentially deadly destructive force of homemade explosives seized during months of protests that have shaken the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

In a demonstration for media cameras, the bomb squad set off a series of controlled explosions in a disused quarry overlooking the city's high-rise skyline, blowing up a watermelon and shredding the front of a minivan.

In July, police announced the seizure of about 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) of TATP, which has been used in militant attacks worldwide. Other recent seizures in Hong Kong involved far smaller amounts, just 1 gram, of TATP, or tri-acetone tri-peroxide.



A protester holds a sign reading "Stop Tear Gas" during a rally against the police's use of tear gas in Hong Kong, Friday, Dec. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

"Obviously, I'm concerned that they are making TATP or are in possession of TATP," said Alick McWhirter, the squad's senior bomb

disposal officer. Just 1 gram of the unstable explosive, equivalent to the weight of a candy, could cause serious injuries, he said.

A demonstration blast of 1 gram of high explosive at the quarry above the bomb squad's fenced-off headquarters caused a loud bang. A blast involv-

ing 50 grams, which would fit into a cigarette packet, sent shrapnel flying from the shattered front of the minivan.

The squad used explosives with a destructive force equivalent to TATP but not TATP itself, because the substance is dangerous to handle and is susceptible to bumps, heat and friction.

"Because I like having 10 fingers, I am not going to use TATP," McWhirter said. In October, police said a homemade remote-controlled bomb intended to "kill or to harm" riot control officers was detonated as they deployed against protests. Causing a loud thud but no injuries, the small blast was the first known use of an explosive device during the protests that started in June over a contested extradition bill and snowballed into an anti-government, anti-police and anti-China movement. □

Indian police fatally shoot 4 suspects in gang-rape case

By MAHESH KUMAR
Associated Press

SHADNAGAR, India (AP) — Indian police on Friday fatally shot and killed four men suspected of raping and killing a woman in southern India, leading some to celebrate their deaths as justice in a case that has sparked protests across the country.

The men, who were in police custody and had not been formally charged with any crime, were taken to the crime scenes, both where the rape and killing are suspected of taking place and the spot where the woman's body was burned about half a kilometer (a third of a

mile) away, according to Shreedharan, an official in the police commissioner's office who uses one name. Another police official said the suspects tried to grab an officer's firearm and escape. That officer spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media. The burned body of a 27-year-old woman was found last week by a passer-by in an underpass near Hyderabad after she went missing the previous night. The high-profile case has sparked protests across India.

About 300 people gathered at the crime scene in Shadnagar, a town in the

state of Telangana about an hour southwest of Hyderabad, to praise police for killing the suspects.

Some hugged officers and lifted them into the air chanting "long live police," while others showered them with flowers. But in New Delhi, some observers condemned the police killing. "This type of justice is counterfeit," said Kavita Krishnan, secretary of the All India Progressive Women's Association.

"The killings are a ploy to shut down our demand of accountability from governments, judiciary and police, and dignity and justice for women. We demand a thorough investi-



People throw flower petals on the Indian policemen guarding the area where rape accused were shot, in Shadnagar some 50 kilometers or 31 miles from Hyderabad, India, Friday, Dec. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

gation into this," she said. Maneka Gandhi, a lawmaker from India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party

and a former Cabinet minister, accused police of taking the law into their own hands. □

Mexicans fleeing violence form new encampment on border

By CEDAR ATTANASIO

Associated Press

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico

(AP) — An exodus of migrants fleeing drug cartel violence and corruption in Mexico has mired hundreds of immigrants in ramshackle tent camps across the border from El Paso and brought new chaos to a system of wait lists for asylum seekers to get into the U.S.

Migrant tent camps have been growing in size at several border crossings in Ciudad Juarez, driven by a surge in asylum seekers from regions in southern Mexico gripped by cartel violence.

One camp in Juarez is populated by about 250 Mexican asylum seekers, who are living in increasingly cold conditions as they wait for U.S. authorities to let them in to the country. They are among thousands of immigrants along the border waiting in Mexican cities, often for several months at a time under daily quotas set by Customs and Border Protection officials that govern how many people get to request asylum at each location.

The wait lists are typically run by local Mexican officials and organizations in consultation with the U.S. government, but the Mexican immigrants rejected the lists in Juarez and opted to organize their own system at each port of entry. Officials in both countries agreed that Mexican immigrants should have their own waiting list and not one managed by government authorities in Mexico because many of them are fleeing corrupt government authorities in Mexico. "American officials told us you know what, we can't deny Mexicans entry. In the end it's the country that they're fleeing," said Enrique Valenzuela, director of Ciudad Juarez's Centro de Atención a Migrantes.

The latest developments in Ciudad Juarez appear to be the first time that CBP has honored multiple lists in a single city, spawning a new level of confusion



In this Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2019 photo, Luis, 38, left, a migrant fleeing gang violence in Michoacan, sits with his 13-year-old son on a bench in a public park facing a tent camp for refugees in Juarez, Mexico.

Associated Press

and competing camps with hundreds of Mexicans at each one as temperatures fall below freezing. Critics of President Donald Trump's immigration policies have condemned the wait list system and a separate program, known as Remain in Mexico, that has sent tens of thousands of migrants back in Mexico as their immigration court cases to play out.

Customs and Border Protection officials say they have no role in operating the lists and are merely performing "queue management" at border crossings based on capacity to process asylum seekers.

On Tuesday evening in Juarez, smoke wafted from wood fires across the sea of blue and black plastic tarps as mothers cobbled together dinner for their families.

At the end of the camp, cars filling six lanes of traffic honked and jockeyed for position coming and going from The Bridge of The Americas, a border crossing bustling with tractor-trailers, taxis and commuters.

The most common reason the camp's occupants flee their homes in Mexico is the inability to pay protection money to local gangs. A father from Ciudad Hidalgo, Michoacan, said he closed

his mechanic's garage after gangs demanded higher and higher monthly fees until he couldn't make the payments and they threatened to kill him.

In the two months he's lived here in a plastic tent with his wife and 8-year-old daughter, they've endured the fluctuating temperatures of the desert and inclement weather that ranges from dust storms to rain. A narrow trench around the tent aims to keep runoff from flooding the place where his wife and daughter sleep.

"In a single week, one lives through every climate," he says.

The immigrant, who asked his last name not be used, anticipates staying here until January, and the temperatures are already approaching freezing.

The Mexican government has set up shelters that have capacity, but he can't go there because he'll lose his place in line. Cities like Juarez have had to manage growing migrant populations since the start of the Trump administration's efforts to push people back and make them wait south of the border.

Despite a commitment from both the U.S. and Mexican governments to safeguard migrants from

and by migrants themselves, some of whom have been storming guarded areas of the border to force Customs and Border Protection officers to process them. Many immigrants have been victims of robberies, sexual assaults and other crimes carried out by cartel gangs.

As night falls on the Juarez camp, a 16-year-old girl who fled the sexual advances of a cartel boss in the violence-plagued city of Guerrero stops by a row of tents with her mother. They were deported after spending about a week in Border Patrol custody. Her documents say that she didn't pass an initial test for asylum called a "Credible Fear Interview."

"Battles to enter, battles to leave," the teen says, listing off the paperwork and interviews they had to do even after their asylum claim was denied.

Her father wants to return to Guerrero, where they own their home, but she doesn't want to go back. They agree they'll probably try and work and save in Juarez for a year or so before they make a decision. That way, she can go to high school without worrying about getting picked up by the mob boss. Maybe he'll forget her.

"That was our tent, but now there's somebody in it," her mother says, pointing to an asylum seeker who has her former place in line. "I don't know where we're going to sleep."

The camp sits on the edge of a towering monument to Benito Juarez, the pro-capitalist legal scholar and president after whom the city was named. In the 1850s, he lived in political exile in New Orleans, Louisiana, working at a tobacco factory. The first Mexican president with indigenous heritage, Juarez became a lawyer and then a judge, advocating for the rule of law in the 19th century and leaving for his children a statement of principles quoted in brass letters along the white stone of the memorial abutting the tent camp. □

LOCAL



**Renaissance Marketplace is back with the greatest event of the year:
Experience Aruba's Christmas Spirit: Winter Wonderland**



ORANJESTAD — Winter Wonderland is a magical world created by the Renaissance Marketplace. For the third time this successful event is on and you simply cannot miss it. Locals are looking forward to this event the full year and visitors will not easily forget the experience. Until December 22nd the Marketplace is transformed into a Christmas fairytale with daily live musical entertainment, an ice skating court, Christmas cottages and meet & greet with Santa Claus and his elves. The village offers seasonal delights for everyone. This daily event is from 6:00pm to 10:00pm.

Jody-Lynn Desbarida is the Shopping Centers Marketing Coordinator and gladly explains what we are going to experience with Winter Wonderland. "Winter Wonderland is a nice get away for adults and children. The main reason of Winter Wonderland is to bring people together, entertain them and bring them into the Christmas spirit. Besides that it is a great option for the community and visitors to meet and connect." For the little ones they offer the ice skating court to enjoy and the arts & crafts workshops in Christmas theme, all for age four and up. There is a fun Dino jump, welcome to children from three years old. "And also important: We have free parking around the whole property."

Continued on Page 14

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Continued from Page 13

This year there are Christmas cottages offering among others the popular Funnel cake and a photo booth for that great Christmas @ Aruba memory. "We have really good live music on stage and you must definitely visit our newest bar 5 o'clock Somewhere by Margaritaville," Jody-Lynn explains. The popular local music bands Grupo di Betico, Las Unicas, Rob-

ert Jeandor y su solo banda show, Claudio Philips y Oreo and many more will for sure make you 'wanna dance'.

Take that cab or drive your car to Winter Wonderland because this is full fun and a great ambiance. Mingle with the locals, shop, eat, drink, dance, feel happy and taste Aruba's Christmas. Discover the magical world of Winter Wonderland where you'll find the best Christmas spirit for this

joyous season. Christmas to Jody-Lynn is being together with her family, the ones you love the most. It is also about having fun, thinking about life and of course enjoying the great food.

"Christmas should be about giving, giving the best of you to everyone around you. I wish for everybody the best that a holiday could offer; peace, joy and love to you and your family." □

Goodwill Ambassadors of Playa Linda Beach Resort



PALM BEACH — Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The Goodwill Ambassador certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba 20 years and more consecutively.

The honorees were couple Victor & Mandy Mulyil visiting for 20 years, together with couple Raymond and Josephine Timmons visiting for 30 years. In five more years, Mr. and Mrs. Timmons will be entitled to receive the Emerald Ambassador certificate. The Emerald Ambassador certificate is the highest certificate that we present, and is given to visitors who have been visiting Aruba 35 years or more consecutively.

This lovely group of people stated that they love the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, delicious variety of foods, its cleanliness, and Aruba's warm and friendly people whom became like family to them.

Richardson together with the representatives of the Playa Linda Beach Resort presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

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Bucuti & Tara earns rigorous Green Globe Recertification

EAGLE BEACH — Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort just earned sustainability re-certification from Green Globe, which represents the International Standard for Sustainability.

The Caribbean's first and only carbon neutral hotel earned its 19th annual Green Globe certification through its steadfast commitment to provide a memorable vacation that's simultaneously sustainable. In 2016, Green Globe awarded Bucuti & Tara its all-new Platinum status and named it "The World's Most Sustainable Hotel/Resort."

"Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort continues to be a shining example of sustainability throughout the region," shares K. Denaye Hinds, LEED AP, and the Green Globe Accredited Auditor who conducted Bucuti & Tara's annual recertification. "Their standard op-



erations embed respect for the environment and responsibility; encouraging those who work at the property to be a part of the solution, naturally. Guests who experience the resort also contribute to environmental standards without compromise. Their long-standing commitment to sustainability through their participation in the Green

Globe Program and other notable certifications sets them apart. Continuously striving to improve year over year in their sustainability achievements, their award of Green Globe Recertification signifies their success."

"Green Globe is the original eco standard for tourism, the one other certifying

fication wraps up a year of major sustainability accomplishments for Bucuti & Tara. In April, the resort earned the World Travel & Tourism Council's Tourism for Tomorrow Climate Action Award. While there, Biemans presented Bucuti & Tara's path to becoming carbon neutral at the Global Summit, which was keynoted by former U.S. President Barack Obama. In June, Biemans was the first individual inducted into the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's Hall of Fame Award for Best Practice for Environmental Sustainability.

The following month Bucuti & Tara earned the National Energy Globe Award, an encore performance from the year prior. Along the way, it was heralded with accolades for its superb guest service and romance. To learn more about the resort, visit Bucuti.com. □

The Green Globe recerti-

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Student award ceremony 2018-2019

ORANJESTAD — The Aula at the University of Aruba (UA), a converted chapel, was once a place of quiet contemplation; but on the evening of Friday, November 29th, it was filled with thunderous applause for the students who submitted the best thesis papers for the 2018-2019 academic year.

The evening's festivities kicked off with inspirational words from Nurianne Arias Helder and Brian Dirkszs. And also it was an exciting night for students from the various student organizations. MAGEC Aruba, The circle K club, the Studenteraad Universiteit van Aruba and the new student ambassadors for 2018-2019.

The University of Aruba has a very progressive approach to education.

They are a forward-thinking academic institution which



offers an educational experience that provides students with a strong academic foundation and caters to the specific needs of the Aruban community. The students were award-

ed for their academic achievements and participation in extracurricular activities and displaying leadership and mentor qualities. They are now official stu-

dent ambassadors 2018-2019.

The atmosphere of the Award ceremony was festive and excitement crackled through the air as the

students received their awards.

The evening ended with socialization under the stars, filling UA's gorgeous gardens with inspirational vibrations. □

SPORTS



Switzerland's Marco Odermatt, bottom, poses for a photo with an eagle after he won the Men's World Cup super-G skiing race Friday, Dec. 6, 2019, in Beaver Creek, Colo.

Associated Press

ODERMATT TAKES BEAVER CREEK SUPER-G FOR 1ST WORLD CUP WIN

By PAT GRAHAM
AP Sports Writer

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. (AP)

— Marco Odermatt's fellow racers watched from the top as he went too straight around one turn and nearly crossed his skis before another.

They marveled at his ability to recover. They admired his capacity to stay composed.

Above all: They know this 22-year-old from Switzerland will be a factor for quite some time.

Odermatt went on a wild ride to finish the technical Birds of Prey course in 1 minute, 10.90 seconds Friday to earn his first World Cup victory. Aleksander Aamodt Kilde of Norway was second, 0.10 seconds behind, and Austrian Matthias Mayer took third.

"It was a perfect day for me, with a nearly perfect run," Odermatt said. "I was really on the edge. I was lucky."

Continued on Page 18

BEAR FOOTIN'



Prescott outplayed by Trubisky as Cowboys lose again

Chicago Bears quarterback Mitchell Trubisky (10) runs for a touchdown during the second half of an NFL football game against the Dallas Cowboys, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, in Chicago.

Associated Press
Page 19

SUPER-G

Continued from Page 17

Or skillful.

He nearly went out in two spots only to recover and keep on cruising to the finish line. In doing so, Odermatt snapped Austria's string of four straight World Cup super-G wins at Beaver Creek. He needed a run just like this, too — barely on the verge of control around several turns.

"It's whoever is willing to take the most risk and then pull it off," said Travis Ganong, who finished sixth for the top finish among the Americans. "Odermatt, he took way too much risk and somehow it worked out. That's a one out of 100 run." Odermatt was the second racer to take the hill, which can be a benefit or a detriment. On the positive side, the snow is still fresh. On the down side, there's no course report.

The consensus was that going that early and making that sort of mistake was a benefit for Odermatt, because he was indeed able to recover on a cleaner track.

The one thing he didn't do was panic. "I just didn't want to break there and so I went full speed there and lost not so much speed," said Odermatt, who was sure they were celebrating in his hometown of Buochs, Switzerland. "So it was possible to do a good run."

His run earned the admiration of Kilde, who was among those watching Odermatt from the top of the course. Then again, Kilde's been singing the praises of this new kid on the scene for a while.

This was Odermatt's third career World Cup podium and first in speed. He took second and third places in giant slalom competitions last season. Odermatt also won four titles at the 2018 world junior championships in Switzerland.

"It looks so easy when he skis," Kilde said. "Today, he really charged. I knew that was going to be really fast." Like Odermatt, Kilde made a tiny mistake. But he still turned in a fast time as the No. 17 racer. "I knew," Kilde said, "I had to charge myself ..." "And he did," Oder-



Switzerland's Marco Odermatt passes the second gate in the Men's World Cup super-G skiing race Friday, Dec. 6, 2019, in Beaver Creek, Colo.

Associated Press

matt playfully interrupted. "... And I did," said Kilde, who finished in a three-way tie for third place last season during the super-G at Beaver Creek. "One mistake here, and he has one mistake and together we were one and two. He's for sure the guy for the future. He's going to be the guy for Beaver Creek for the next 20 years."

Mayer had a strong run despite a sore hip. He crashed

in a giant slalom training session Tuesday and wasn't sure how the hip would respond. Mayer won the opening super-G race of the season in Lake Louise, Alberta, last weekend. "My hip is better," Mayer said. "I'm pretty happy about third place."

For German racer Thomas Dressen, this was about getting comfortable on the course again and not so much his place (27th).

He crashed a year ago in Beaver Creek and tore the ACL in his right knee. Dressen, who won the downhill in Lake Louise last weekend, feels even more comfortable ahead of Saturday's downhill. "It's not the course's fault that I crashed. It's mine," Dressen said. "If you're honest with yourself, you can learn from your mistakes. I like the course a lot. It's one of my favorites." □

Former No. 1 Wozniacki to retire after Australian Open

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

Former No. 1 and 2018 Australian Open champion Caroline Wozniacki will retire from professional tennis after competing in Melbourne next year.

The 29-year-old from Denmark wrote in an Instagram post on Friday that she wants to start a family with her husband, former NBA player David Lee, and work to raise awareness about rheumatoid arthritis.

Wozniacki said her decision to stop playing "has nothing to do with my health." She announced in October 2018 that she has rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune condition that can cause pain and swelling in the wrist and other joints.

"I've always told myself, when the time comes, that there are things away from tennis that I want to do more, then it's time to be done," Wozniacki wrote. "In



In this Friday, Oct. 4, 2019 file photo, Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark reacts after beating Daria Kasatkina of Russia in their quarterfinal match in the China Open tennis tournament in Beijing.

Associated Press

recent months, I've realized that there is a lot more in life that I'd like to accomplish off the court."

She is currently ranked No. 37 after going 20-15 with-

out a singles title in 2019. Coached for much of her career by her father, Piotr, a former professional soccer player, Wozniacki used tremendous court cover-

age — she ran in the New York City Marathon — and uncanny ability to get back shot after shot from opponents in a counter-punching style to win 30 WTA

titles, including the season-ending tour championships in 2017.

At just 19, Wozniacki was the runner-up to Kim Clijsters at the 2009 U.S. Open, then again was the runner-up at Flushing Meadows in 2014 to her good friend Serena Williams.

Wozniacki claimed her first major championship in her third such final, and 43rd appearance in a Grand Slam tournament, at last year's Australian Open. She beat Simona Halep in a three-set final to return to the top of the rankings after a six-year absence, a record.

As someone who had played so well, for so long, without ever quite claiming one of her sport's most important trophies until then, Wozniacki was thrilled to set aside all of the questions about whether she ever would win a major title. □

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Mitchell Trubisky helps Bears beat Cowboys 31-24

By ANDREW SELIGMAN

AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Mitchell Trubisky and the Chicago Bears appear to be hitting their stride, even if it might be too late to salvage their season. Trubisky threw three touchdown passes and ran for a score in Chicago's 31-24 victory over Dak Prescott and the slumping Dallas Cowboys on Thursday night.

In a matchup between disappointing teams that made the playoffs last season, the Bears (7-6) came away with their fourth win in five games after dropping four in a row. The Cowboys (6-7) have lost seven of 10 since a 3-0 start.

"I think it shows we're resilient," Trubisky said. "We stick together. We believe in each other even when nobody else believes in us. It's a special group in that locker room. We just want to keep this feeling going." Trubisky shook off an early interception near the goal line to complete 23 of 31 passes for 244 yards. He matched a season high for touchdown throws and set one with 63 yards rushing. That included a 23-yard scoring dash early in the fourth quarter to make it 31-14.

Allen Robinson caught two TD passes and Anthony Miller had one as Chicago tied a season scoring high.

On defense, Khalil Mack had a sack but linebacker Roquan Smith left the game with a pectoral injury on the opening drive, with coach Matt Nagy saying it "doesn't look real good for him." Still, the Bears took

out the NFC East leaders after beating the struggling Detroit Lions twice and New York Giants in recent weeks.

"Most teams at some point in time will hit some type of adversity," Nagy said. "We went through that four-game stretch. It was difficult in a lot of different ways. ... Everybody's seeing what type of people we have on this football team. No one's flinched. We've pulled together. We've become even tighter."

SLUMP CONTINUES

Facing a top-10 defense for the third week in a row, the Cowboys once again couldn't get their high-powered offense going.

"I can't put a finger on it," said Prescott, the NFL's passing leader. "I wish I could right now. If I could we wouldn't be in this situation, we would be getting over this and out of this slump, but that's the most frustrating part, we have the skill level, we have the players, we have the chemistry at times, But we're not playing together as a team, complementary enough when we need to, and we need to figure it out." Prescott was 27 of 49 for 334 yards and a touchdown. Ezekiel Elliott ran for 81 yards — his fifth straight game under 100 — and two scores.

Michael Gallup had 109 yards receiving. Amari Cooper caught six passes for 83 yards and a touchdown, but the Cowboys lost their third straight. They lead Philadelphia by a half-game in the division.

"I know we have the right



Chicago Bears quarterback Mitchell Trubisky (10) runs in for a touchdown against Dallas Cowboys' Chidobe Awuzie (24) during the second half of an NFL football game, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, in Chicago.

Associated Press

pieces in place, right players, right talent. Just about doing it instead of talking about it," Cooper said.

TAKING CONTROL

Kept out of the end zone in a 13-9 loss at New England two weeks ago and then held to two touchdowns in falling 26-15 to Buffalo on Thanksgiving, the Cowboys went 75 yards for a score on the game's opening possession.

Elliott lunged in from the 2 to cap a 17-play drive. Jordan Lewis then intercepted Trubisky's pass with a neat play near the left pylon, dragging his left foot. He was initially ruled out of bounds, but the call was overturned by a replay review.

But it was all Bears after that. Chicago tied it early in

the second quarter when Trubisky hit Robinson with a 5-yard pass and took a 10-7 lead on a 36-yard field goal by Eddy Piñeiro. Dallas' Brett Maher then missed a 42-yarder wide right.

Chicago added to the lead in the closing seconds of the half with Trubisky's 8-yard pass to Robinson, and Miller's 14-yarder in the third made it 24-7. "I think we stayed ahead of the chains, we scored early, we were able to get the run game going," Robinson said. "All aspects of our offense were working today. We were able to keep them off balance."

FOR KICKS

Maher is 20 for 30 on field goals this season after going 1 of 2. The 10 misses are more than any other NFL

kicker has had in a season the past four years.

INJURIES

Cowboys: WR Cedric Wilson jammed his left leg trying to catch a long pass in the closing minute. ... LB Leighton Vander Esch (neck), NT Antwaun Woods (knee) and S Jeff Heath (shoulder) were inactive.

Bears: WR Javon Wims (knee) walked off gingerly in the closing seconds of the first half after an awkward landing as he tried to make a leaping catch in the end zone. ... CB Prince Amukamara (hamstring) was inactive after being listed as doubtful. ... WR Taylor Gabriel (concussion), TE Ben Braunecker (concussion) and RT Bobby Massie (ankle) all missed their second straight game. □



New York Knicks coach David Fizdale reacts during the first half of the team's NBA basketball game against the Denver Nuggets, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Associated Press

AP source: NY Knicks fire coach David Fizdale

By BRIAN MAHONEY

AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Knicks fired coach David Fizdale on Friday after two straight blowout losses dropped them to 4-18, a person with knowledge of the decision said.

Fizdale ran practice earlier in the day but was then fired, the person told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because no announcement had been made. The Knicks have lost eight straight games, with the last two by scores of 132-88 to Milwaukee on Monday night and 129-92 to Denver on Thursday night. They have the worst record in the Eastern Conference after finishing with the worst record in the NBA last season in Fizdale's first season. Fizdale's firing was first reported by ESPN.

The Knicks went 17-65 last season to match the worst record in franchise history and they are on pace to even worse this season. New York missed out on the top stars that were available in free agency and the players they did get haven't meshed nearly well enough.

Still, team executives expected better results, saying so with an unusual press conference to express their disappointment after a loss to Cleveland on Nov. 10 dropped them to 2-8.

Team President Steve Mills and general manager Scott Perry said then they remained confident in Fizdale. But things didn't get much better from there, especially once the schedule turned tougher this month.

And it led to the second straight quick exit for Fizdale as a head coach. The former Miami assistant led Memphis to the playoffs in his first season, but then was fired after the Grizzlies got off to a 7-12 start in 2017-18 and he clashed with center Marc Gasol.

New York will turn to its 13th coach since Jeff Van Gundy resigned in the 2001-02 season. The Knicks have been one of the worst franchises in sports since, with just a single playoff series victory and a current stretch of six straight losing seasons.

They believed a turnaround could come this summer, when they had enough money to sign two superstars after trading All-Star Kristaps Porzingis to Dallas last summer. But Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving agreed to join Brooklyn in the opening hours of free agency and the Knicks had to move on to players that included Julius Randle, Bobby Portis, Taj Gibson and Marcus Morris - who largely play the same position. The Knicks host Indiana on Saturday, then begin a four-game trip Tuesday in Portland. □



Houston Rockets guard Russell Westbrook (0) controls the ball between Toronto Raptors' defenders, left to right, Terence Davis, Serge Ibaka and Kyle Lowry during second half NBA action in Toronto on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019.

Associated Press

Rockets rebound to beat Raptors 119-109

By The Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Russell Westbrook had 19 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists, James Harden shook off a slow start to score 23 points and the Houston Rockets beat the Toronto Raptors 119-109 on Thursday night, snapping a three-game road losing streak.

Ben McLemore had a season-high 28 points, P.J. Tucker added 18 points and 11 rebounds, and Danuel House Jr. scored 16 as the Rockets handed Toronto its second straight home loss after a franchise-record nine straight wins to begin the season.

Pascal Siakam scored 24 points, Fred VanVleet had 20 and Kyle Lowry 19 as the Raptors lost back-to-back regular-season home games for the first time since losing to Oklahoma City and Charlotte last March 22 and 24.

McLemore set a career high by making eight 3-pointers on 17 attempts. Tucker matched his season high with five made 3-pointers. Houston finished 22 for 55 from long range.

Harden shot 7 for 11, his fewest attempts of the season. He failed to finish as Houston's leading scorer for the second time this season. The only other time was an opening-night loss to Milwaukee, in which Harden shot 2 for 13 and scored 19 points.

Harden landed heavily after taking contact on his drive to end the third. He was tended to by trainers before getting to his feet and slowly walking to the locker room, but returned 2 1/2 minutes into the final quarter.

WIZARDS 119, 76ERS 113

WASHINGTON (AP) — As well as the Philadelphia 76ers have been playing at home lately, they just can't consistently get their act together on the road, and a combined 15 turnovers by Joel Embiid

and Ben Simmons contributed to a loss at Washington.

The Sixers dropped to 5-7 away from Philadelphia — where they are 10-0 this season — despite 33 points from Tobias Harris, 26 points and a season-best 21 rebounds from Embiid, and 17 points and 10 assists from Simmons.

Facing one of the most lax defenses in the NBA, Embiid had eight turnovers and Simmons seven. The 76ers ended up with 21 in all, leading to 30 points for the Wizards, who had lost five of their past six games entering the night.

Bradley Beal had 26 points and 10 rebounds for Washington.

Rookie Rui Hachimura scored 27, while Davis Bertans scored 19 of his season-high 25 points in the second quarter.

The 76ers have lost 10 games in a row at Washington; their last victory in the nation's capital came on Nov. 1, 2013.

SUNS 139, PELICANS 132, OT

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Devin Booker broke out of a perimeter-shooting slump, scoring 21 of his season-high 44 points in the third quarter, and Ricky Rubio powered Phoenix with four points and a critical assist in overtime in a victory over New Orleans.

Playing the back end of a back-to-back, Phoenix led by 18 points entering the fourth quarter, but the Pelicans fought back with five 3-pointers, two by the normally scatter-shooting Lonzo Ball, to tie it at 125. The Pelicans had a chance to win in regulation, but Brandon Ingram missed a 15-foot jumper from the right baseline as time expired.

In overtime, Ingram's conventional three-point play tied it at 129, but Rubio hit a 12-footer and a scoop in the lane and then added a no-look assist to put the Suns up 135-129. Rubio finished with 15 assists. □

Woodland leads in the Bahamas as Tiger gets within 2 shots

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP) —

Two big birdies from Gary Woodland gave him the lead in the Hero World Challenge. A closing birdie on a hole that has vexed Tiger Woods put him in range of a third victory this year. Patrick Reed fully expected to be right there within until watching video of his club moving sand away from his golf ball in a waste area, leading to a two-shot penalty in a round that didn't go all that well in the first place.

The end of an entertaining round in this holiday event in the tropics set up what figures to be a lively conclusion. Woodland's final two birdies gave him a 4-under 68 and a one-shot lead over Henrik Stenson. Six players were separated by three shots.

That includes Woods, who hasn't won his event since it was in California in 2011. With one eye on being a playing captain at the Presidents Cup next week in Australia, Woods focused on birdies instead of potential pairings at Royal Melbourne was two shots off the lead.

The final round is Saturday so the American team — 11 are in the tournament, Dustin Johnson is coming to the Bahamas to join them on the charter — can get an early start across the globe.

"I just have to focus on go-



Patrick Reed tees off on the par-5 ninth hole at Albany Golf Club during the second round of the Hero World Challenge in Nassau, Bahamas, Thursday Dec. 5 2019.

Associated Press

ing out there and making birdies," Woods said. "And then I have 23 hours on a plan to recover."

Woodland makes his Presidents Cup debut next week, and he appears to be in good form. He dropped only one shot, gave another way by failing to birdie the par-5 15th, and then finished in style. First, he holed a 30-foot putt on the par-3 17th. Then, with the wind at his back, he hit wedge to 3 feet for another birdie.

On Thursday, he ended his round with three straight birdies.

"It was a nice finish, same as yesterday," he said. "So excited about where I'm

at and I look forward to tomorrow."

The next two weeks cap off a memorable year for Woods, who won his first major at Pebble Beach in the U.S. Open, and then his wife had twins. This is the first time traveling with the entire family — three kids under 2 — and they couldn't fit all the car seats and strollers on the plane. It was a forgettable day for Reed in so many ways. Staked to a three-shot lead, he didn't make a birdie until the 14th hole, a short par 4 that can be reached off the tee. He added two more down the stretch, only to lose two strokes in the scoring room.

Reed was in a sandy waste area left of the fairway on the par-5 11th when video clearly caught his sand wedge removing sand right behind the ball — twice — during practice swings.

That's a violation of Rule 8.1a (4) on removing or pressing down sand or loose soil.

Reed says the club was farther away from the ball than it looked on television, and he said with the face being open, he didn't realize the club had brushed away sand because "I didn't feel it drag."

"So after seeing the video, it's a two-stroke penalty. I accept that," Reed said.

He's still very much in the

picture after his 74, three shots behind with only five players in front of him after a day feeling as though nothing was going in the hole.

It's an All-Star cast in front of Reed, and chasing Woodland.

Stenson is trying to end 49 starts worldwide without a victory as he tries to get his swing back to when he was at his best. The 43-year-old Swede shot 68 despite chip shots dropping into the wrong cup — a sprinkler head — on consecutive holes. He will be in the last group with Woodland.

Justin Thomas, who has never had a higher score when playing alongside Woods, kept that streak alive. They each shot 67 and will play together again in the final round. Defending champion Jon Rahm had a 69 and was two shots back.

Thomas has become close with Woods, and they are a likely pairing next week in the Presidents Cup. Thomas was particularly artful around the greens with a full flop shot on the ninth, and a 5-wood to putt it up the slope for a tap-in birdie on the par-5 third.

"Look at that short game," Woods said. "Just go around and look at the shots he hit today. The kid's got great touch."

That will come in handy at Royal Melbourne next week. For now, they're all playing for themselves and a \$1 million check. □

Blazers give Carmelo Anthony a guaranteed contract

By ANNE M. PETERSON

AP Sports Writer

PORLAND, Ore. (AP) — The Portland Trail Blazers have given forward Carmelo Anthony a fully guaranteed contract for the remainder of the season.

The team had signed Anthony to a non-guaranteed contract last month and had until a January deadline to guarantee the deal.

Anthony, who hadn't played for more than a year before he was formal-

ly signed on Nov. 19, has meshed well with the Blazers, averaging 16.9 points and 5.9 rebounds since joining the team.

The 10-time NBA All-Star was named Western Conference Player of the Week after he averaged 22.3 points, 7.7 rebounds and 2.7 assists over Portland's three-game winning streak last week.

Anthony, 35, played seven-plus seasons for the Nuggets before being traded in 2011 to the New York

Knicks, where he spent six-plus seasons.

He also has played one season each with Oklahoma City and Houston. The Rockets traded him to Chicago in January but the Bulls cut him before he played a game.

Anthony filled an immediate need for the Blazers, who became short-handed at forward when Zach Collins injured his shoulder and required surgery that is expected to keep him out for at least four months. □



Portland Trail Blazers' Carmelo Anthony, left, is defended by Los Angeles Clippers' Patrick Patterson during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2019, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Landeskog scores in return, Avalanche beat Canadiens 3-2

By The Associated Press

MONTRÉAL (AP) — Gabriel Landeskog scored in his return from a lower-body injury and the Colorado Avalanche beat the slumping Montreal Canadiens 3-2 on Thursday night.

Ryan Graves and Matt Calvert also scored and backup goalie Pavel Francouz made 39 saves to help the Avalanche win their fifth straight game and improve to 18-8-2. Brendan Gallagher and Nick Cousins scored for Montreal. The Canadiens have lost nine of 10 to fall to 12-11-6. Cayden Primeau stopped 32 shots in his NHL debut. The 20-year-old son of former NHL player Keith Primeau played in the first of a back-to-back for Montreal, with Carey Price set to face the New York Rangers on Friday night.

BLACKHAWKS 4, BRUINS 3, OT

BOSTON (AP) — Jonathan Toews scored 54 seconds into overtime and Chicago recovered after blowing a three-goal, third-period lead to end Boston's eight-game winning streak.

Toews picked up the puck after a turnover by David Pastrnak and skated in on Tuukka Rask before backhanding it between the goalie's legs. The crowd, which thought Pastrnak had been tripped, began showering the ice with garbage. Robin Lehner made

37 saves for the Blackhawks, who had lost six of their previous seven games. Ryan Carpenter and Dylan Strome scored 37 seconds apart at the end of the first period, and Alex DeBrincat scored off the opening faceoff of the third period to make it 3-0 — the first three-goal deficit Boston had faced all season.

ISLANDERS 3, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2, OT

UNIONDALE, N.Y. (AP) — Ryan Pulock scored a power-play goal 3:20 into overtime to lift New York past Vegas. Cal Clutterbuck and Brock Nelson also scored for the Islanders. They won their seventh straight at Nassau Coliseum and snapped Vegas' four-game winning streak. Marchessault was sent off for tripping at 3:10 of OT, giving the Islanders a 4-on-3 advantage. That led to Pulock's goal after New York won the faceoff in the Vegas zone.

HURRICANES 3, SHARKS 2, SO

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Andrei Svechnikov scored in the shootout, Petr Mrazek stopped San Jose cold in the tiebreaker and Carolina beat the Sharks. Svechnikov had a goal and an assist in regulation, Jake Gardiner also scored and Warren Foegele added two assists for the Hurricanes. Mrazek stopped 28



Colorado Avalanche's Gabriel Landeskog (92) scores against Montreal Canadiens goaltender Cayden Primeau as Canadiens' Jeff Petry defends during the first period of an NHL hockey game Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, in Montreal.

Associated Press

shots. Svechnikov had the only goal of the tiebreaker, beating Aaron Dell with a forehand to his stick side in the third round. Mrazek, who had stopped Kevin Labanc and Erik Karlsson in the first two rounds, then stuffed Logan Couture with his pads and stick to end it. Marcus Sorensen scored and Couture added a deflected goal for the Sharks.

WILD 5, LIGHTNING 4

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Mats Zuccarello had a goal and two assists and Minnesota beat Tampa Bay for its fifth straight victory. Joel Eriksson Ek, Jason Zucker, Carson Soucy and Victor Rask also scored for the Wild, who have an 11-game point streak (8-0-3). Alex Stalock stopped 30 shots.

COYOTES 3, FLYERS 1

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Phil Kessel scored two goals to lead Arizona past Philadelphia.

Darcy Kuemper made 28 saves and Conor Garland also scored for the Coyotes. They improved to 10-3-3 on the road.

Matt Niskanen scored for Philadelphia. The Flyers had won five in a row and had points in seven straight games.

RANGERS 3, BLUE JACKETS 2
COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Artemi Panarin scored the decisive goal in his return to Columbus, leading New York past the Blue Jackets.

Panarin's goal was his team leading 13th. He left Columbus after signing a lucrative free-agent contract in the offseason with New York.

Brendan Lemieux and Jacob Trouba also scored

for New York, and backup goalie Alexander Georgiev made a season-high 45 saves. Cam Atkinson and Seth Jones scored for Columbus.

STARS 3, JETS 2, OT

DALLAS (AP) — Joe Pavelski scored on the power play 2:02 into overtime in Dallas' victory over Winnipeg. The goal came 31 seconds after Josh Morrissey went to the penalty box. Tyler Seguin picked up a rebound of his own shot and sent a backhand pass to Pavelski, who scored his sixth goal this season. Dallas' Ben Bishop made 36 saves, 15 in the third period and overtime. Jamie Benn and Denis Gurianov scored the first two goals of the game. The Stars had lost 11 of the last 14 games against Winnipeg. □



In this Oct. 30, 2019, file photo, Washington Nationals' Howie Kendrick hits a two-run home run against the Houston Astros during the seventh inning of Game 7 of the baseball World Series, in Houston.

Associated Press

AP sources: NLCS, Series star Kendrick, Nats agree for 2020

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Postseason star Howie Kendrick and the World Series champion Washington Nationals agreed to a \$6.25 million, one-year contract, according to two people with knowledge of the negotiations.

Speaking on condition of anonymity Friday because the deal was still pending a successful physical exam, the people confirmed

to The Associated Press that an agreement was in place for Kendrick to return to Washington for what will be his 15th season in the majors.

One of the people said the contract includes a mutual option for 2021.

The 36-year-old Kendrick, who was a free agent, provides Washington with a middle-of-the-order bat and some flexibility in the field. He primarily plays at first base now, but started

games at every infield position except shortstop in 2019.

The righty batter hit .344 with 17 homers and 62 RBIs in 121 regular-season games before all of his postseason contributions provided some real pop in the postseason. He hit a tiebreaking grand slam off Joe Kelly in the 10th inning of Game 5 of the NL Division Series to lead the Nationals to a 7-3 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers. □

'Sportswashing' fears dog Ruiz-Joshua fight in Saudi Arabia

By STEVE DOUGLAS

AP Sports Writer

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)

In one part of Riyadh, two of the world's most high-profile boxers squared off at a weigh-in outside a 5-star hotel ahead of the first heavyweight title fight to take place in the Middle East.

Across town, American rappers Akon and Chris Brown were about to headline a concert at a UNESCO heritage site.

Saudi Arabia is undergoing fairly radical social change in some ways under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, but critics say the country is using big sports and entertainment events to divert attention from its questionable human-rights record.

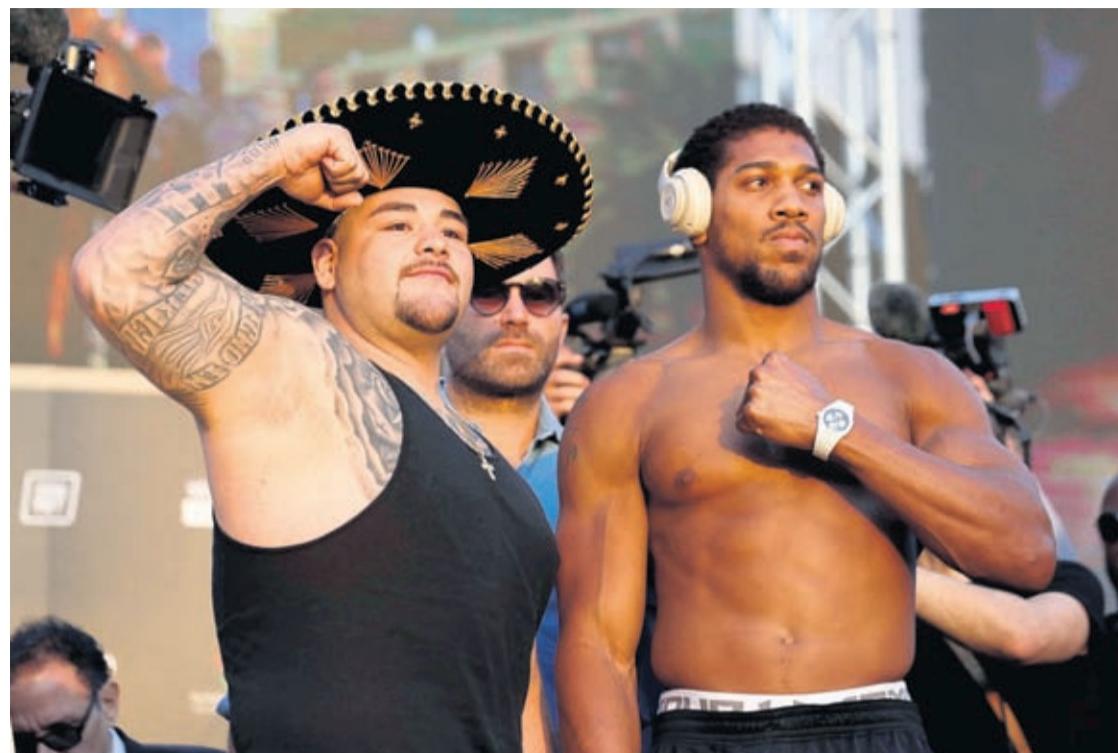
The kingdom's government-backed General Sports Authority has a different view, saying the push to portray a new image of modernization and to boost tourism is "a journey of transformation."

Anthony Joshua, the British fighter seeking to reclaim three heavyweight titles from Mexican-American champion Andy Ruiz Jr. in their rematch in Saudi Arabia this weekend, hasn't just been fielding questions about the bout. He's also faced scrutiny over whether he is being used by the Saudis in a bid to "sportswash" their reputation.

"All I'm here to do is box," Joshua told The Associated Press this week when asked if he had any concerns about fighting in the kingdom. "So away we go. We are here now. I'm comfortable."

Reportedly pocketing \$70 million for being here, Joshua was unlikely to say anything else.

"It's a massive opportunity," he told the AP. "Boxers need opportunities. Every sport and every business needs global opportunity. It ticks a box for business, but also tourists and sports." The "sportswashing" theory, as put forward by human rights organization Amnesty International, among others, was also



Heavyweight boxers Anthony Joshua of Britain, right, and Andy Ruiz Jr. of U.S. pose during a weigh-in at Faisaliah Center, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Friday, Dec. 6, 2019.

Associated Press

put to Joshua's promoter this week.

"I was driving up and down the road last night, thinking of all the criticism I've been getting. And I passed Gucci, Starbucks, Dunkin' Donuts, Versace and Ralph Lauren," Eddie Hearn said. "The Saudis want to show they are changing. And they want a more positive image worldwide by bringing in events. But isn't that what they should be doing?"

"They have got to change, and they are changing. But the great news is that boxing is going to be responsible for those changes and that shows you the power of sport."

The "sportswashing thing," Hearn said, was "over my head."

Amnesty said in an email to the AP that it wasn't necessarily asking Joshua to boycott the fight, thereby forfeiting the biggest payday of his career, but rather that he "inform himself of the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia and be ready to speak out."

It's something Joshua has chosen not to do.

There was a huge international outcry following the brutal killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul last year. Saudi Arabia denied any involvement by the

crown prince but its own investigation acknowledged the operation was planned by two of his top aides.

There are strict limits on expression in the country. Women's rights activists and others have been targeted for arrest in the lead-up to women being allowed to drive for the first time last year. Prince Mohammed oversaw what was described as an anti-corruption roundup in 2017 that saw Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton Hotel turn into a detention facility, and princes, government officials and others detained. The roundup helped solidify Prince Mohammed's power.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia remains mired in a years-long war in neighboring Yemen, the Arab world's poorest nation, that has killed more than 100,000 people and seen the kingdom criticized for airstrikes targeting civilian areas. Amnesty said it recorded 146 executions in Saudi Arabia last year, the third highest in the world behind only China and then Iran. The executions are held in public.

There is, therefore, a concerted effort to improve the image of the regime, while using increased spending on sports and entertainment to promote it and advance Saudi's

one-year, multiple-entry visa that allows people from 49 different countries to spend up to 90 days in Saudi Arabia.

"Thousands will be entertained in the cradle of modern Saudi civilization," Prince Abdulaziz Bin Turki Al Faisal Al Saud, chairman of the General Sports Authority, said of "Diriyah Season." "Our arms are open and our welcome has never been warmer."

Certainly there has been change, with the crown prince regarded as the driving force behind loosening restrictions on women, who were allowed in sports stadiums for the first time last year to watch a soccer match. A national women's soccer team was created this year. A big step had already been made seven years ago when Saudi Arabia sent women to the Olympics for the first time.

Nevertheless, women are still segregated and most cover their faces and hair with black veils and wear loose-flowing black robes. Hearn said he expects there to be "loads of women" at the fight on Saturday.

And he is quite confident that Ruiz-Joshua will not be the last mega-fight seen in the kingdom in the coming years.

"They can't believe they got this (fight) and it is nearly here," Hearn said, "and they are saying, 'What's next?'" □

Chase Elliott gets 2nd most popular NASCAR driver award

JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) —

Chase Elliott's run as NASCAR's most popular driver hit two consecutive years when he was voted as the sport's top star.

Elliott won the award last season, the first since Dale Earnhardt Jr. retired to end his streak of 15 consecutive years as winner. Earnhardt Jr. fell one year short of the record 16 set by Hall of Famer Bill Elliott

— Chase's father.

The award is based on a fan vote and sponsored by the National Motorsports Press Association. Bill Elliott won the award every year between 1984 and 2002 until he removed his name from consideration. But the honor was returned to his family last year with Chase's first victory, and the 24-year-old now seems to be a lock to reel off his own impressive run. □

NATO researchers: Social media failing to stop manipulation

By KELVIN CHAN
AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Social media companies are failing to stop manipulated activity, according to a report Friday by NATO-affiliated researchers who said they were easily able to buy tens of thousands of likes, comments and views on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

Most of the phony accounts and the activity they engaged in remained online weeks later, even after researchers at the NATO Strategic Command Centre of Excellence flagged them up as fake.

The center, an independent group based in Latvia that advises the military alliance, said the findings contrast with statements from tech companies that say they've been working harder on stamping out manipulation.

"Overall social media companies are experiencing significant challenges in countering the malicious



This combination of images shows logos for companies from left, Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.
AP Business Writer

use of their platforms," the report said.

Online manipulation emerged as a major issue for tech companies after the 2016 U.S. election, when Russian influence efforts came to light. The researchers found that most fake social media activity is bought for commercial, not political, reasons. It can include Instagram influencers trying to pump up their profiles to make more money

from their brand contracts. Fake accounts are still used for political means, though it's a minor slice of the industry and aimed at "non-western" pages, the researchers said, noting they were used to buy engagement on hundreds of political pages and dozens of government pages. To carry out the study, the researchers turned to the "manipulation service provider" industry, which is ex-

panding to feed the growing demand for phony clicks and likes.

They used 16 companies, most based in Russia, to buy fake online engagement for 105 posts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. They spent just 300 euros (\$330) to purchase 3,530 comments, 25,750 likes, 20,000 views and 5,100 followers.

To avoid influencing real conversations, they only

bought clicks for posts that were at least six months old and carried neutral and non-political messages, such as "Hello!" and "Thank you!" on New Year's greetings from European Union commissioners.

Four weeks later, 80% of the fake activity remained online, the researchers found, as they sought to gauge whether the sites were independently detecting misuse. They then reported 100 of the accounts as fake, but found about 95 remained active three weeks later.

Some companies were better than others, the report said.

YouTube was the easiest site on which to create fake accounts but the best at countering artificial likes and video views.

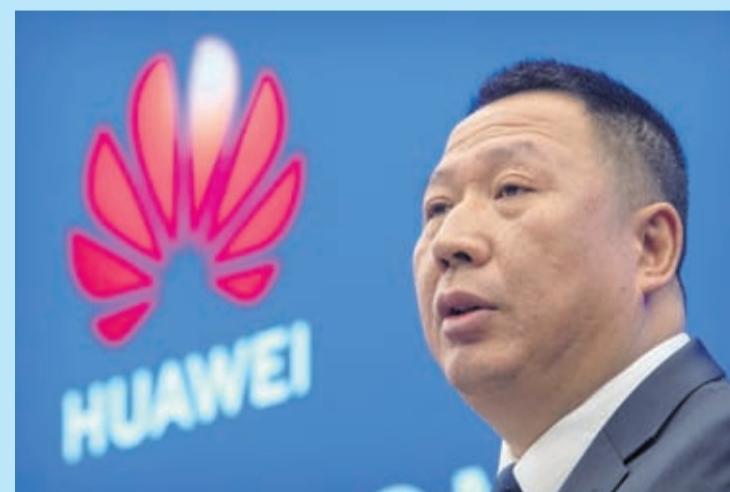
Manipulating Instagram is easy and cheap because the site is largely unable to detect and stop it, while Twitter was best at detecting and removing manipulation. □

Huawei asks court to throw out U.S. telecom funds ban

By SAM McNEIL
Associated Press

SHENZHEN, China (AP) — Chinese tech giant Huawei is asking a U.S. federal court to throw out a rule that bars rural phone carriers from using government money to purchase its equipment on security grounds. The lawsuit announced Thursday is Huawei Technologies Ltd.'s second legal challenge this year to Trump administration efforts to reduce its already minimal U.S. market presence. The company is scrambling to preserve its global sales of smartphones and network gear following sanctions announced in May that limit access to U.S. components and technology.

Huawei, which says it is employee-owned and has no government ties, denies U.S. accusations it is a security risk and might facilitate Chinese spying. Huawei is at the center of



Song Liuping, chief legal officer of Huawei, speaks during a press conference at Huawei's campus in Shenzhen in southern China's Guangdong Province, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019.

Associated Press

U.S.-Chinese tension over Beijing's technology ambitions and complaints the communist government steals or pressures foreign companies to hand over know-how.

Huawei's lawsuit in U.S. federal court in New Orleans says the Federal Communications Commission acted improperly when it voted last month to bar ru-

ral carriers from using government subsidies to buy equipment from Huawei or its Chinese rival, ZTE Corp. The decision "is based on politics, not security," Huawei's chief legal officer, Song Liuping, told a news conference. The lawsuit says the FCC exceeded its authority by making national security judgments, designated Huawei a

threat without evidence and violated its own procedures by adopting a rule without citing a legal basis. American courts have traditionally been reluctant to second-guess government judgments about national security. In a separate lawsuit filed in March, Huawei is asking a federal court in Texas to strike down a ban on the U.S. government using its equipment or dealing with any contractor that does.

Meanwhile, U.S. prosecutors are trying to extradite Huawei's chief financial officer from Canada to face charges she lied to banks about dealings with Iran. Chinese authorities say the United States is exaggerating security concerns to block a potential competitor.

Huawei warned the FCC rule will hurt rural American carriers, which buy the Chinese vendor's equipment because other major sup-

pliers such as Nokia and Ericsson are more expensive. Song said that while potential lost sales are minimal, if the rule is allowed to stand, Huawei might suffer "reputational losses" that will "have a further impact on our business." Huawei's U.S. sales plunged after a congressional panel warned in 2012 the company and ZTE were security risks and told carriers to avoid them. However, its sales in Europe and developing markets in Asia and Africa have risen steadily. Huawei earlier reported its global sales rose 24.4% in the first nine months of 2019 over a year earlier to 610.8 billion yuan (\$86 billion). The Trump administration imposed curbs in May that threaten to disrupt Huawei's sales of smartphones and network gear by blocking access to U.S. technology and components including Google's music, maps and other mobile services. □

US gains a robust 266,000 jobs; unemployment falls to 3.5%

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hiring in the United States jumped last month to its highest level since January as U.S. employers shrugged off trade conflicts and a global slowdown and added 266,000 jobs.

The unemployment rate dipped to 3.5% from 3.6% in October, matching a half-century low, the Labor Department reported Friday. And wages rose a solid 3.1% in November compared with a year earlier. Investors cheered the report, sending the Dow Jones industrial average up more than 300 points in late-morning trading.

November's healthy job gain runs against a widespread view that many employers are either delaying hiring until a breakthrough in the U.S.-China trade war is reached or are struggling to find workers with unemployment so low. The pace of hiring points to the resilience of the job market and economy more than a decade into the U.S. economic expansion the longest on record.

The steady job growth has helped reassure consumers that the economy is expanding and that their jobs and incomes remain secure. Consumer spending has become an even more important driver of growth as the Trump administration's trade con-



In this Nov. 27, 2019, file photo Balo Balogun labels items in preparation for a holiday sale at a Walmart Supercenter in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

flicts have reduced exports and led many businesses to cut spending.

"Today's jobs report, more than any other report in recent months, squashed any lingering concerns about an imminent recession in the U.S. economy," said Gad Levanon, an economist at the Conference Board, a business research group. "Consumers are entering the holiday season with both the ability and the willingness to spend." The healthy data suggested that the Federal Reserve, which meets next week, is unlikely to cut its benchmark short-term interest rate anytime soon. The Fed has cut rates three

times this year to help nurture the economy.

At the same time, Chairman Jerome Powell has said the Fed is not inclined to raise rates in response to ultra-low unemployment until inflation has risen consistently, which has yet to happen. The perception that any rate hikes are a long way off has helped underpin the stock market's gains.

Monthly job growth has picked up since summer: It has averaged 205,000 over the past three months, up from just 135,000 in July. Renewed concerns that trade will continue to hamper the U.S. economy drove stock prices lower

earlier this week, after President Donald Trump had said he was willing to wait until after the 2020 elections to strike a preliminary trade agreement with China. With the two sides still haggling, the administration is set to impose 15% tariffs on an additional \$160 billion of Chinese imports beginning Dec. 15.

Both sides have since suggested that the negotiations are making progress, but there is still no sign of a resolution. The return of striking General Motors autoworkers added roughly 40,000 jobs in November, a one-time bounce-back that followed a similar decline in October, when the

GM strikers weren't counted as employed. Excluding the strikers, manufacturing jobs showed a small gain. In Friday's hiring data, besides reporting the healthy November gain, the government revised up its estimate of job growth for September and October by a combined 41,000.

Outsize hiring for the holiday shopping season did not appear to be a major driver of last month's job growth. Retailers added just 2,000 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis. And transportation and warehousing firms gained fewer than 16,000. Both figures are below last year's totals. The shopping season is shorter this year because Thanksgiving occurred later than in recent years, which might be delaying some temporary hiring.

Employers have been adding jobs at a solid enough pace to absorb new job seekers and to potentially lower the unemployment rate, though the pace of job growth is still down from last year's rate.

With tariffs hobbling manufacturing, the job market this year has underscored a bifurcation in the economy: Service industries finance, engineering, health care and the like have been hiring at a solid pace, while manufacturers, miners and builders have been posting weak numbers. □

China waiving tariff hikes on US soybeans, pork

Associated Press

China is waiving punitive tariffs on U.S. soybeans and pork while the two sides negotiate a trade deal, the Ministry of Finance said Friday.

Beijing promised in September to lift the tariffs, adding to conciliatory steps that raised hopes for a settlement. The government announced then that Chinese importers were placing orders but no details of when the tariff exemption would take effect were released.

China is "carrying out the

exclusion," the Ministry of Finance said on its website. The ministry and the Ministry of Commerce did not respond to requests for further information.

Negotiators are working on the details of a "Phase 1" agreement announced in October by President Donald Trump.

The two sides have raised tariffs on billions of dollars of each other's goods, disrupting global trade and threatening to depress economic growth.

Another U.S. tariff hike on an additional \$160 billion

of Chinese imports is due to take effect Dec. 15.

Chinese spokespersons have expressed hope for a settlement "as soon as possible," but Trump spooked global financial markets this week by saying he might be willing to wait until after the U.S. presidential election late next year.

A sticking point is Chinese insistence that Washington must roll back punitive tariffs as part of any deal.

A Chinese spokesman repeated Thursday that Beijing expects such a move in a "Phase 1" agreement. □



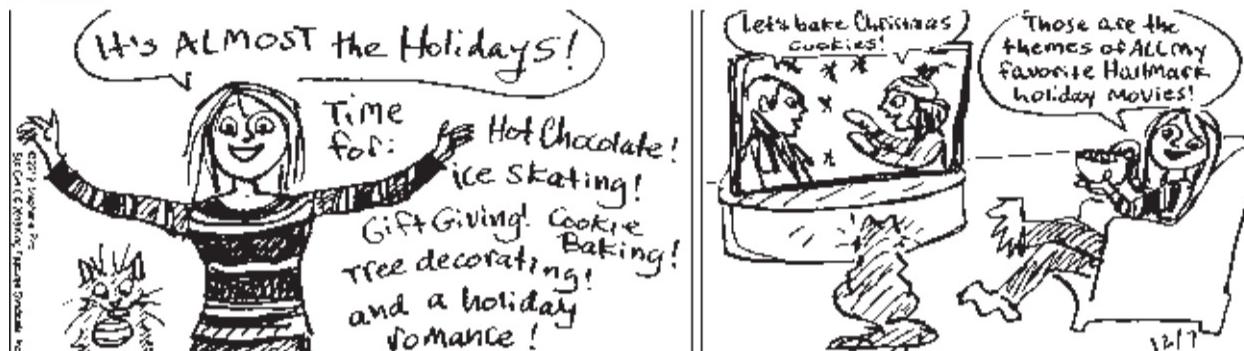
In this Friday, Sept. 21, 2018, file photo, soybeans are offloaded from a combine during the harvest in Brownsburg, Ind.

Associated Press

Mutts



6 Chix



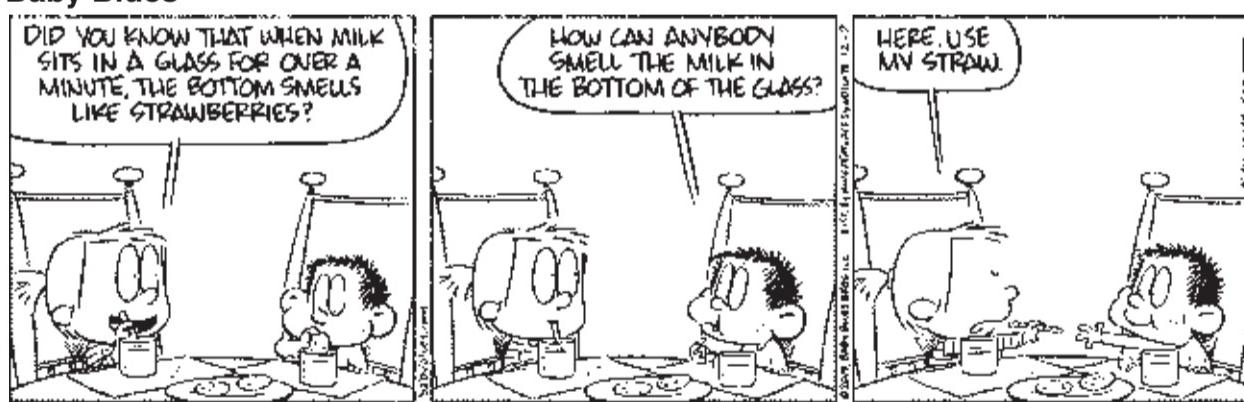
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

1		6							3
2		8	5					7	
		1		6				7	
3								2	
8		3		9					
5			1	7				8	
		2							4
6									

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

4	7	8	5	9	2	6	1	3
1	2	9	3	6	7	4	8	5
6	3	5	4	8	1	2	9	7
8	6	7	1	5	3	9	2	4
5	9	4	6	2	8	7	3	1
3	1	2	7	4	9	5	6	8
7	5	1	9	3	6	8	4	2
9	8	3	2	7	4	1	5	6
2	4	6	8	1	5	3	7	9

Yesterday's puzzle answer



ACROSS
1 Cock-hatch
2 crowns, e.g.
4 Classic novel
5 Varmer
9 Erie sightings,
for short
13 Portia
15 Happening
16 To think over
17 36
17 Leaf gatherer
18 Spinning blade in
an engine
19 Ship's pole
20 Volet; callow
22 Prince's delights
23 Small stocky
24 Rose
24 16-oz. weight
25 Bowler's joy
29 Answer to a
problem
34 Wooden box
35 Repeated
36 Singing pair
37 Sushi eat staple
38 Pea's attraction
39 Light bulb's unit
of power
40 Lincoln's
friends
41 Passover meal
42 M.V.C. border
area
43 Bugged
45 Beauty spots
46 Skirt's edge
47 Sausage in a
casing
48 Steak orderer's
request
51 Fugitives
56 Chopping loc's
57 Too taurine
58 High
59 Gary
Cooper film
60 Highland
61 V.B. Solo
62 Very excited
63 Knight & Turner
64 Preferences
65 Less than a
do-lop
66 Competitive
67 Painted
68 Double :lod
in hat
69 Montana's
neighbor
70 Walks in
desert
71 Jets down
72 A : with ice
cream on top
73 Presidentia
nialas
74 On the :
traveling

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/7/19

Friday's Puzzle Solved

PIN	AMENS	SWAP
TUNA	SIDES	TRUE
IFFY	SLITHERING	
NFL	GENES	MITTS
ELATE	NOV	
MAXIMS	PETERS	
ASIDE	GRACE	ELF
MUDS	CAULK	SPUR
ALL	BRIMS	HOUSE
DECEIT	LOATHE	
AGB	DEBRA	
ABOVE	BRAVO	TVS
REVITALIZE	FIAT	
MEET	LATER	ROSY
SPRY	SHEDS	ONE

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38 Bus depot
39 Dead Man
40 Sean Penn film
41 Observe
42 Light brown
shades
44 Grad school
assignments
45 Tendons
47 Food barrier
48 Hulk Farn's leaf
49 Wheel rod
50 Rex or Donca
52 Three Biblical
kings
53 Ferrer's cousin
wars
55 Guru's exercise
56 Selza an outlaw



In this Friday Nov 22, 2019 file photo, Hunter, a young Belgian Malinois, keeps an eye on Jazz, a nine-day-old giraffe at the Rhino orphanage in the Limpopo province of South Africa.

Associated Press

Abandoned baby giraffe befriended by dog in Africa dies

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A baby giraffe that was befriended by a dog after he was abandoned in the wild has died, a South African animal orphanage said Friday.

"Our team is heartbroken," the orphanage said.

Jazz the giraffe collapsed after hemorrhaging in the brain, The Rhino Orphanage said in a Facebook post. "The last two days before we lost him, Jazz started looking unstable on his legs and very dull, almost like he wasn't registering everything," it said. "He suddenly collapsed

and we could see blood starting to pool back into his eyes."

Resident watchdog Hunter seemed to realize something was wrong and didn't leave the baby giraffe's side, and was there when he died, the orphanage said. The dog then sat in front of the empty room for hours before going to its carers "for comfort."

Orphanage staff had expected this to happen, assuming that the mother giraffe had abandoned the baby for a reason, Arrie van Deenter, the orphanage's founder, told The Associated Press. □

TODAY

BONDIA

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Oceanside \$16,500
Oceanview \$15,500
3BEDRM \$28k
*WK. 51 OV \$39k
*WK 52 OV \$49k
* Weeks 7 and 14-all views

GOLD Season
2B Oceanfront \$14k
2B Oceanside \$8k
GV \$5k OV \$7k
3BEDRM \$13k

Marriott Aruba Ocean

PLATINUM Season
2 Bed OV \$16500 Club
2B OF \$26k
1B OV \$9k
** Destination points \$8 per point

GOLD Season
2B Oceanfront \$14k
2B OV \$9k
1 Bed \$4k
1B OF \$9k

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CRUISES



December 7
Royal Clipper
December 8
Carnival Sunshine

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Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989

Women in Difficulties
Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888

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Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

General Info

Phone Directory Tel. 118



This May 20, 2019, file photo shows a Mexican gray wolf. Associated Press

EPA rejects ban on poison bombs against cattle predators

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Trappers can keep using sodium cyanide bombs to kill coyotes and other livestock predators, the Trump administration said Thursday, rejecting calls for a ban despite repeated instances of the devices also poisoning other wildlife, pets and people. The Environmental Protection Agency's interim decision newly restricts use of the so-called M-44s within 600 feet of a home and 300 feet of a public road or path. Users also would have to post two warning signs within 15 feet of the poison bombs.

The agency's assistant administrator, Alexandra Dunn, said in a statement that the EPA had worked with the Agriculture Department "to ensure there are safe and effective tools for farmers and ranchers to protect livestock."

The Center for Biological Diversity and other conservation advocacy groups had sought a ban on the devices, which typically are covered with smelly bait, and are designed to eject deadly sodium cyanide when an animal stops to inspect and gnaw on them.

In 2017, one of the devices injured a 14-year-old Idaho boy walking near his home and killed his pet Labrador. Collette Adkins, carnivore conservation director at the center, cited two earlier instances this century of the devices spraying sodium cyanide on people out hunting for rock specimens or walking their dogs.

Federal wildlife trappers and hunters reported killing 6,579 animals with the devices last year, including more than 200 other nontargeted animals, including bears.

"You're out hiking with your dogs and your children, and you come across these, you have to be lucky enough to see one of these signs," Adkins said. Any dog "that's running around is going to get killed." □

U.S. flu season arrives early, driven by an unexpected virus

By MIKE STOBBE

AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. winter flu season is off to its earliest start in more than 15 years.

An early barrage of illness in the South has begun to spread more broadly, and there's a decent chance flu season could peak much earlier than normal, health officials say.

The last flu season to rev up this early was in 2003-2004 — a bad one. Some experts think the early start may mean a lot of suffering is in store, but others say it's too early to tell.

"It really depends on what viruses are circulating. There's not a predictable trend as far as if it's early it's going to be more severe, or later, less severe," said Scott Epperson, who tracks flu-like illnesses for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There are different types of flu viruses, and the one causing illnesses in most parts of the country is a surprise. It's a version that normally doesn't abound until March or April.

That virus generally isn't as dangerous to older people — good news, since most flu hospitalizations and deaths each winter occur in the elderly. However,

such viruses can be hard on children and people younger than 50.

Louisiana was the first state to really get hit hard, with doctors there saying they began seeing large numbers of flu-like illnesses in October.

Children's Hospital New Orleans has already seen more flu cases this fall than it saw all of last winter, said Dr. Toni Gross, the hospital's chief of emergency medicine. Last month was the busiest ever at the hospital's emergency department. Officials had to set up a triage system and add extra shifts, Gross said.

"It is definitely causing symptoms that will put you in bed for a week," including fever, vomiting and diarrhea. But the hospital has not had any deaths and is not seeing many serious complications, she said.

Health officials tend to consider a flu season to be officially underway when — for at least three weeks in a row — a significant percentage of U.S. doctor's office visits are due to flu-like illnesses. That's now happened, CDC officials said this week.

The agency on Friday estimated that there have already been 1.7 million flu illnesses, 16,000 hospitaliza-

tions, and 900 flu-related deaths nationally.

The most intense patient traffic had been occurring in a six states stretching from Texas to Georgia. But in new numbers released Friday, CDC officials said the number of states with intense activity rose last week to 12. Flu is widespread in 16 states, though not necessarily at intense levels in each, the CDC said.

Last flu season started off as a mild one but turned out to be the longest in 10 years. It ended with around 49,000 flu-related deaths and 590,000 hospitalizations, according to preliminary estimates.

It was bad, but not as bad as the one before it, when flu caused an estimated 61,000 deaths and 810,000 hospitalizations. Those 2017-2018 estimates are new: The CDC last month revised them down from previous estimates as more data — including actual death certificates — came in.

In both of the previous two flu seasons, the flu vaccine performed poorly against the nasty predominant virus. It's too early to say how well the vaccine is performing right now, Epperson said. □



In this Feb. 7, 2018 file photo, a nurse prepares a flu shot at the Salvation Army in Atlanta. Associated Press

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2-year old Arthur becomes star in UK Christmas ad tradition

By DANICA KIRKA

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Little Arthur crawls out of bed in his red Marvel Comics pajamas, brushes his teeth and strolls outside after breakfast to his day job: helping out at the family hardware store in Rhayader, Wales. It's Christmas and Arthur, nearly 3, has his work cut out for him wrapping presents, hanging ornaments and helping customers.

But the cute video with 1.3 million views on YouTube - and counting - comes with a larger larger message. Don't forget the little guy. "The small little family owned businesses still exist out there," said Arthur's dad, Thomas Lewis Jones, 30. "If you can afford to shop locally, do so. If you can't, I hope you just enjoy the video."

Big Christmas ads have become a tradition in Britain an opportunity usually for much larger companies to pull out all the stops to woo holiday shoppers and stamp their brands firmly on the consumer brain. These are usually mini mov-



In this Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, photo a woman watches as a brightly lit float passes by during the Christmas parade Thursday night in downtown Bristol, Va.

Associated Press

ies, similar to Super Bowl showstoppers in the United States, that feature warm and fuzzy characters like lovestruck penguins and mythical creatures who reveal the true meaning of Christmas.

The don't normally originate in a town 200 miles from London and have a budget of 100 pounds

(\$130).

Yet this simple, day in the life of Arthur promotional video has drawn attention to much larger problems of bricks and mortar U.K. retailers this Christmas, struggling as they do with issues ranging from the steady losses to internet retailers to a controversial local tax system whose reform is

constantly discussed.

Despite initiatives, such as Small Business Saturday, small stores really are facing challenges. They are often dwarfed by the bigger stores that can offer better prices and more selection. Many have a tough time getting through each year. "What this video has done is throw into the spotlight

the very real challenges that smaller firms throughout the U.K. are actually facing," said Mike Cherry, the national chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses. "They are facing spiraling business rates, high rents and online competition, expensive town center parking and the loss of bank branches and ATMs. All of these issues make for a perfect storm that is putting many small businesses at risk."

Jones, who runs Hafod Hardware, simply made Arthur his go-to star to promote the store. Arthur's supporting cast is his grandfather, John, his great-grandfather Alan and his great-grandmother Pauline. The filmmaker, Josh Holdaway, is a family friend and has a cameo appearance. Since being posted Monday, Jones' phone has not stopped ringing. At the time he was speaking to The Associated Press on Friday, he noted with some degree of astonishment that the video was popular in Japan. □

In Musgraves' Christmas special, her grandma steals the show

By ALICIA RANCILIO

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Grammy winner Kacey Musgraves knows who the real star is in her family — her grandmother. That's why the singer put the woman she calls Nana in her upcoming holiday special, "The Kacey Musgraves Christmas Show."

"Basically, this is just Nana's world. We're just all livin' in it. This is Nana's Christmas special if you hear from her. I'm just in it," said Musgraves on Tuesday at a special screening of the special in New York.

Musgraves initially worried how her grandmother would handle being on camera, but those fears quickly subsided.

"I was like, 'OK, this is my 80-something-year old grandmother. Is she gonna come in like, forget the lines, like, you know. She's



Singer-songwriter Kacey Musgraves attends the premiere of Amazon Prime Video's "The Kacey Musgraves Christmas Show," at Metrograph, Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2019, in New York.

Associated Press

not used to this,'" Musgraves said. "She came in, she gave us ad-libs, she was like giving us different inflections like she knew what to do. It was really cute." "The Kacey Mus-

graves Christmas Show" debuts Nov. 29 on Amazon Prime Video. The special features a number of celebrities, including Fred Armisen, Camila Cabello, James Corden and Ken-

dall Jenner. It's narrated by Dan Levy of "Schitt's Creek."

Musgraves got the idea for the special a year ago and spent months coming up with the concept.

Filming took place during the summer in a hot California.

"It was like, 90 degrees in LA in like this airplane hangar that we shot it in, didn't have air conditioning. So, I was wearing Christmas clothing, on my feet for like 16 hours a day, like just tryin' to make Christmas happen. And I think we did," Musgraves said. "It's been Christmas for an entire year for me. So, I can't tell if I'm sick of it or if I'm really excited. I think I'm really excited."

Last week, Musgraves took home female vocalist of the year and video of the year for "Rainbow" at the Country Music Association Awards. The show was hosted by Carrie Underwood, Dolly Parton and Reba McEntire and was hyped as a night dedicated to the women of country music. □

Already a star in China, US fame comes to 'Farewell' actress

By LINDSEY BAHR

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Actress Zhao Shuzhen, who has captivated audiences with her performance as the grandmother in "The Farewell," is essentially unknown to most American audiences. Go to her IMDB page and it looks as though writer-director Lulu Wang's real-life family drama is her only credit.

But that couldn't be further from the truth. In her native China, the 75-year-old is not only a veteran of stage and screen, she's also a big star.

It was a pivotal role for the film and for Wang personally. "The Farewell" is based on the filmmaker's actual life, in which her family discovers that their beloved grandmother is terminally ill, decides to keep that



This Nov. 11, 2019 photo shows actress Zhao Shuzhen posing in West Hollywood, Calif., to promote her film "The Farewell."

Associated Press

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QUE LEONES
SPANISH
PH MON-THU 6:10 | 8:30
FRI 6:10 | 10:50
SAT 3:50 | 6:10 | 8:30 | 10:50
SUN 3:50 | 6:10 | 8:30
PBP MON-THU 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20
FRI 7:05 | 9:20 | 11:35
SAT 2:35 | 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20 | 11:35
VIP SUN 2:35 | 4:50 | 7:05 | 9:20

WAVES
PBP MON-FRI 5:45
SAT-SUN 2:50 | 5:45
OLGA KURYLENKO | GARY OLDMAN

THE COURIER
PH MON-FRI 7:10 | 9:30
SAT-SUN 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30
HELEN MIRREN | IAN MCKELLAN

THE GOOD LIAR
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
PH MON-FRI 6:45 | 9:10
SAT-SUN 1:55 | 4:20 | 6:45 | 9:10
KARTIK AARYAN | BHUMI PEDNEKAR

PATI PATNI AUR WOH
PBP MON-FRI 3:40 | 6:25 | 9:10
SAT-SUN 12:55 | 3:40 | 6:25 | 9:10
CHADWICK BOSEMAN | J.K. SIMMONS

21 BRIDGES
THE ONLY WAY OUT IS THROUGH HIM
PH MON-THU 6:00 | 8:20
FRI 6:00 | 8:20 | 10:40
SAT 3:40 | 6:00 | 8:20 | 10:40
SUN 3:40 | 6:00 | 8:20
PBP MON-THU 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30
FRI 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30 | 11:45
SAT 2:45 | 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30 | 11:45
SUN 2:45 | 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30

DANIEL CRAIG | CHRIS EVANS KRISTEN STEWART | NAOMI SCOTT CHRISTIAN BALE | MATT DAMON

Knives Out
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG-13
PBP MON-FRI 3:45 | 6:30 | 9:15
SAT-SUN 1:00 | 3:45 | 6:30 | 9:15

CHARLIE'S ANGELS
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG-13
PBP MON-FRI 9:20

FORD v FERRARI
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG-13
PBP MON-SUN 8:40

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fact from her and stages a wedding so they have an excuse to gather everyone together to say goodbye. The heart of the film, which is currently available on home video and has awards buzz behind it, is about the relationship between Wang's alter-ego Billi (Awkwafina) and her grandmother Nai Nai. Shuzhen got her first awards season recognition on Thursday when the Film

Independent Spirit Awards nominated her for an acting prize; "The Farewell" was also nominated for best feature.

Word of mouth led Wang to Shuzhen, who had never acted in an American production before. Diana Lin, who had already been cast to play Billi's mother, recommended her to the director.

"I worked with her before and she was a great per-

son to work with. Zhao is a great friend as well," Lin said. "She was the first person I thought of! I used to call her Cat-y Auntie (like Kitty) because the way she smiles is warm and soft and sweet. Also, when I was a little girl, probably about 14, I watched her theater plays because we were in the same theater company in Harbin City."

Shuzhen fell into acting almost accidentally. □

Guns N' Roses, Maroon 5, Khaled part of pre-Super Bowl shows

By MESFIN FEKADU

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Guns N' Roses, Maroon 5, DJ Khaled and DaBaby will bring the heat to Super Bowl week in Miami. On Location Experiences announced the lineup for its second Bud Light Super Bowl Music Fest, to take place Jan. 30 through Feb. 1 at AmericanAirlines Arena in Miami.

DJ Khaled, who has collaborated with everyone from Jay-Z to Justin Bieber, will headline the EA SPORTS BOWL on Jan. 30. Khaled's performance will include some of his famous friends. DaBaby, who had a huge hit this year with "Suge," will also



In this Feb. 3, 2019 file photo, Adam Levine of Maroon 5 performs during halftime of the NFL Super Bowl 53 football game between the Los Angeles Rams and the New England Patriots in Atlanta.

Associated Press

perform at the show. Other performers will be announced later.

Guns N' Roses will headline on Jan. 31, while Maroon 5 and a special guest will perform at the Feb. 1.

"The Super Bowl is America's biggest cultural moment, so it attracts people from a variety of different worlds — it also is a mix of local, national, and international guests. □

Film probes history of Native Americans in the US military

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)

— Before Chuck Boers joined the U.S. Army, the Lipan Apache member was given his family's eagle feathers. The feathers had been carried by his great-great-great-grandfather on his rifle when he was an Apache scout.

They also were carried by relatives who fought in World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

In 2004, Boers had the feathers with him during the Battle of Fallujah in Iraq. "I felt like I had my family with me to protect me," he said.

"The Warrior Tradition," a new film set to air on PBS, examines the complex history of Native Americans in the U.S. military since World War I and how their service transformed the lives for Native Americans from various tribes.

Through interviews with veterans and using archival footage, the documentary probes the complicated relationship Native Ameri-



In this June 15, 2017, file photo, Navy Hospital Corpsman Third Class Kevin Zotigh, of the Kiowa tribe, performs a ceremonial dance as part of a Native American blessing for veteran and active-duty servicemen in Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Associated Press

cans had with military service and how they used it to press for civil rights.

The documentary exhibits the mixed feelings some Native Americans felt toward the U.S. military and how tribal members em-

braced those who served as "warriors."

"From just about the beginning of the United States itself, the government has fought various wars against Native nations.

And that's the irony," Patty

Loew, director of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research at Northwestern University, said in the film.

But Native Americans, from tribes in Oklahoma to nations in Washington, joined

the U.S. military to honor their "end of the treaty" that the U.S. government previously broke, Loew said.

At the onset of World War I, the first generation of Native Americans after the so-called Indian Wars began joining the U.S. Army even though they weren't considered citizens or allowed to vote.

Returning veterans, and also those from World War II, earned accolades for their service. For example, Comanche and Navajo Code Talkers in World War II were credited with passing secrets amid hostile fighting.

The returning veterans began demanding the right to vote and fought against discrimination.

For example, Miguel Trujillo Sr., a Marine sergeant in World War II and a member of Isleta Pueblo in New Mexico, returned and waged a legal battle to overturn that state's law that barred American Indians living on reservations from participating in elections. □

San Francisco Opera names its first female music director

JOCELYN GECKER

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

The San Francisco Opera has named conductor Eun Sun Kim its new music director, ushering the first woman into the job in the company's history.

The 39-year-old Kim will become the company's music director designate effective immediately and take on the position permanently in August, conducting Beethoven's "Fidelio" when the 2020-21 season opens, the company said Thursday.

"From my very first moments at San Francisco Opera, I felt this was home," Kim said in a statement.

She said she found "an unusual feeling of open collaboration" across the company and was honored to take on the new role.

Kim's appointment marks



This undated photo provided by the San Francisco Opera shows San Francisco Opera Music Director Designate Eun Sun Kim.

Associated Press

the latest change in musical leadership at a major American opera house. At the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Yannick Nezet-Seguin took over as music director in the 2018-

19 season, following James Levine who held the position for 40 years and was fired in 2018 over allegations of sexual abuse and harassment.

Levine has denied the al-

legations.

At the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Andrew Davis will retire as music director at the end of the next season after more than 20 years and be replaced by con-

ductor Enrique Mazzola. Kim succeeds Nicola Luisotti whose nine-year tenure as music director ended in 2018.

She will lead the orchestra, chorus and music staff and conduct concerts and up to four productions each season in her initial five-year contract, the company said.

Born in South Korea, Kim began her career in Europe and made her U.S. debut in 2017, leading a production of "La Traviata" at Houston Grand Opera, where she was subsequently named the company's first principal guest conductor in 25 years, the statement said.

She made her Washington National Opera debut last month and has upcoming performances scheduled at Los Angeles Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago, among other companies. □



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